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A F A L L E N F A I T H :

BEING A

HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL SKETCH

OF THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

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# A FALLEN FAITH:

BEING A

HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL SKETCH

OF THE

## SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

✓ BY

EDGAR SHEPPARD, M.D.,

LICENTIATE OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, AND FELLOW OF  
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

"Sir, I am a man of the world, and I take the colour of the world as it moves along."

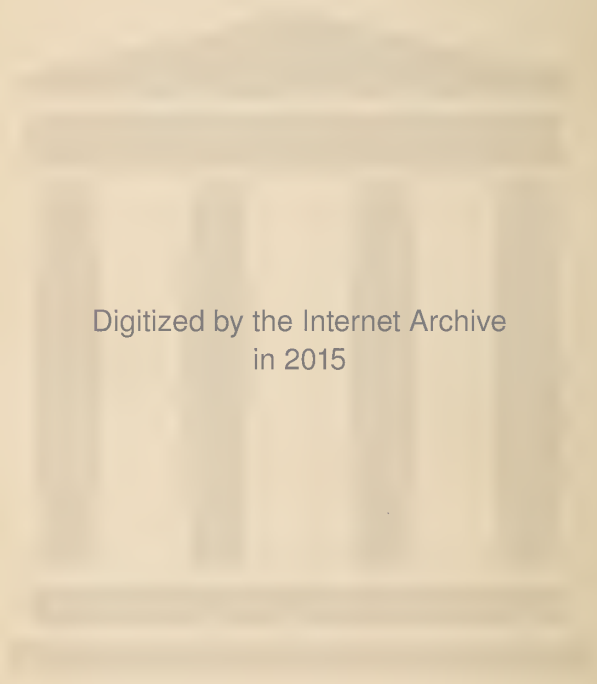
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## P R E F A C E.

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IT will become obvious to any one who takes the trouble to read this Essay, that the subject of which it treats is not handled in a connected and closely logical, but, rather, in a discursive, manner. The Author has felt that the bearings of that singular Eclecticism named the Society of Friends, are so multiform, and extend their ramifications into so many matters and principles, not ordinarily recognized as influencing Religious Creeds, that he has preferred the course here alluded to and adopted. Moreover, such a mode of treatment is in accordance with the habits of his own mind.

It will be seen that the Decadence of Quakerism is rather attributed to that which is physically, mentally, and socio-politically obstructive, than to that which is purely theological. The system is regarded as an unhealthy and prohibitory one, incapable of exercising that true discipline which can alone eventuate in lofty Christian excellence. The Quakers who *have* been excellent have been so (as will be shown) by a repudiation of their own principles. The Author does not admit the validity of the argument, that liability to abuse a blessing necessitates the non-usage of that blessing.

The censure which has been dealt out to the Society of Friends, both in respect of its morbid origin and its morbid continuity, is compatible with the largest measure of respect for individual members. It will be seen, too, that, in various places, this respect has been abundantly yielded. And the Author feels it but justice to state, that some of the most excellent characters he has ever met with have professed those principles which are here brought under consideration. At the same time, they have been *transition* Quakers, fully recognizing the follies of their Faith, and the prospect of its inevitable decay.

*London, November, 1859.*

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#### ERRATA.

Page 44, line 17, *for Fanatics. read Fanatics?*  
,, 52, ,, 25, *for laid read led.*  
,, 61, ,, 33, *for Scriptual read Scriptural.*  
,, 63, ,, 10, *for drank read drunk.*  
,, 165, ,, 23, *for to read too.*



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It has been said, by no less an authority than Jeremy Taylor, that “that is no good Religion whose principles destroy any duty of Religion.” If this be true (as it unquestionably is), what imperfect pietists are the great majority of mankind—by what fictitious creeds are we surrounded! And it is somewhat singular that the form of Religion most obnoxious to this duty-destroying charge, is the one which, of all others, has had the highest theoretical aspirations, and proposed to itself what it has believed to be the purest form of Christian discipline. Happily, however, as the generations roll on, we are becoming more impressed with the fact that a religious system, to be enduring, must be endowed with (what Quakerism has peculiarly lacked) the gifts of “length, and breadth, and depth.” Without these it is unable to fulfil its moral and social obligations to those by whom it is outwardly sustained and nurtured. It must have the power to expand—there must be nothing mean or narrow

about it—in other words, it must have sympathy. A mere “meditative insulation,” be it never so pure and well-intentioned, is a feeble impassivity, which cannot reach the affections, cannot enlist the loves, and therefore cannot enlarge the hearts, of any people. A system of perpetual introversion is a perpetual draining of a barren soil, without adding thereto the manifold helps which can enrich and fertilize. It is a repudiation of the very means which have been placed at our disposal for carrying on the mighty warfare against “the world, the flesh, and the devil.” For to withdraw from the world is, not to use it, and, therefore, to abuse it, by denying ourselves the legitimate experiences which are to fit us for another life, and test our capacity for a larger and more extended communion in heaven. To shrink from a careful and well-regulated exercise of our natural impulses, is practically to deny the usefulness of the gifts of an all-wise Creator. To run away from the devil, and constantly be looking round every corner to see if he is coming, is not to “fight manfully against” him. It is rather the surest means of exposing to him our cowardice, and therefore giving to him the best opportunity of a successful onslaught upon our weaknesses; whereas he is alone to be encountered by confronting him boldly, and overpowering him by the combined influences of our intellectual, our moral, and our spiritual natures.

Let us consider for awhile what claims the thing called Quakerism has to our respect and sympathy, and how obvious are the reasons why it must eventually perish, in this country, and be of the things dead and buried.

Is the purest type of this eccentric creed so ideal and unsubstantial as to be unadapted to the requirements of the world? Or is that a correct definition of it given by

one of its apologists—though not a Quaker himself—when he terms it “an attempt, under the Divine influence, at practical Christianity, as far as it can be carried” ?\* I think that this is not a true definition, and that it would be more appropriate to term Quakerism *an attempt, under misapprehensive views of Divine grace and government, at practical Christianity, further than it can be carried.* Which, in point of fact, is tantamount to saying, that it is *not* practical but theoretical Christianity, fitted only for “angels or ghosts,” in a less turbulent state of existence than that in which we have been placed by Almighty Wisdom, and in no sense adapted to the manifold wants and weaknesses of mortality.

And yet—Heaven knows—the early years of this great religious movement of the seventeenth century were of themselves sufficiently turbulent, and constituted such a strange compound of wild fanaticism, absolute insanity, and undoubted Christian zeal, as the world has rarely witnessed.

It will be impossible to form any correct estimate of the Society of Friends—of its present position, its admitted decadence, and the prospect of its eventual dissolution—unless we give some detail of its antecedents, and of its first Apostle and Founder.

Quakerism, then, is the story of little more than two centuries. It inaugurated its eventful career by an active aggression upon the recognized rights of man, and the conventional usages of society. Claiming for its disciples liberty of conscience, and freedom of speech and manner, it yet denied that liberty to others, by boldly proclaiming

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\* *Portraiture of Quakerism*, by Thomas Clarkson, M.A. Vol. i. p. 4. London, 1805.

the advent of a new Messiah, and the falsity of all existing religions.\* The Church of England, the Church of Rome, and all Nonconformist bodies, were alike exposed to the unmeasured abuse, and virulent denunciations, of an ignorant fanatic. No one who reads dispassionately the history of George Fox, as recorded in his own *Journal* (which Sir James Mackintosh said was one of the most wonderful books in the world), can doubt either the ignorance or the fanaticism of his early years, any more than he can doubt the excellence of Fox's moral life, or the self-denial which he habitually practised.

It will be my endeavour to present the first phases of this man's faith in a different aspect to that under which they have usually been contemplated; appealing to our increased knowledge of psychology, as a justification of the opinions advanced, from a study of Fox's recorded symptoms.

I have no hesitation then in stating boldly, that this first apostle, and unnecessary martyr, of the Society of Friends was suffering during the first few years of his "spiritual call," from what is termed by alienist physicians *Religious Melancholia, with delusions, and occasional paroxysms of maniacal excitement*. I appeal, I repeat, to our increased knowledge of symptoms, to Fox's own record of his acts and *feelings*, and to the opinion of those who were brought in contact with him, in order to justify my conviction. It may be a novel view to take of a character which has been shrouded in the starched veneration of

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\* Fox says: "Then I went to an alehouse, to which many resorted betwixt the time of their morning and afternoon preachings; and had a great deal of reasoning with the people, declaring to them that *God was come to teach his people himself*, and to bring them off from all false teachers," &c.—*Fox's Journal*, third edit., 4to, by William Penn. London, 1765. p. 70.

two centuries.\* But it is assuredly a veracious one; and I am certain that there is no lunatic asylum in the United Kingdom, containing a fair proportion of cases of recent insanity, where you might not find unhappy individuals labouring under symptoms precisely analogous to those of the first founder of Quakerism. And I am equally positive that could this man live again, in this nineteenth century, and make again the same exhibitions to the world, he would immediately be brought within the jurisdiction of the Lunacy Commissioners, and find, under their direction, a peaceful temporary home in Bethlem or St. Luke's.

It had been well for society had our hospitals for the insane been then what they are now, places for the cure—embracing every kind of moral, material, and spiritual comfort—rather than the punishment, of insanity. Fox would then have returned to the world, after a few months' judicious treatment, a sober well-conducted citizen; and we should have been spared the spectacle of exhibitions (as I shall presently show) of the most shameless character; and, in later times, of that which is far more to be grieved at—a corporate Society, which has numbered many excellent individuals in its ranks, and strenuously endeavoured to bear witness to the Truth, absolutely tumbling to pieces, dying from complete inanition, under our very eyes. The expression of this opinion is compatible with the largest respect for Fox's zeal and earnestness, and for the self-denying excellence of his life. But I could no more bring myself to believe, as many have believed, that this man was specially raised up by God for

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\* It is true that Fox himself frequently said the people took him for a madman; and William Penn records the same fact. But "the fellow's mad," is a conventional mode of expressing ourselves about all persistent extravagances of speech and manner.

religious purposes, than I could entertain the thought that Mr. Commissioner Yeh has been sent by the same Providence (a correlative of the former admission) to destroy 70,000 of his Chinese fellow-subjects.\*

George Fox was born in Leicestershire, in the month called July, in the year 1624, his father being a weaver. It is recorded that he was "early endued with a gravity and staycdness of mind," and impressed with the "wantonness" of human nature. A pot of beer, he says, was the immediate cause of his first "convincement." He declined drinking toasts with his companions, a refusal which they resented by making him pay for the entire company: whereupon he left them and returned home, "very serious." "But he did not go to bed that night, but prayed and cryed earnestly to the Lord; and it seemed to him that his supplications were answered after this manner: 'Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth; *therefore thou must forsake all both young and old, and be as a stranger to them.*' *This, which he took to be a Divine Admonition, made such a powerful impression upon him, that he resolved to break off all familiar fellowship and conversation with young and old, and even to leave his relations, and live a separate and retired life.*" Thus he acted, and he spent his time

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\* This monster is reported, during the brief period of his vice-royalty, to have tortured, and put to death by every kind of barbarity, the above number of human creatures.

"The 'early Friends,' as well as their successors in religious profession, have always assuredly believed that G. Fox was an instrument chosen of God, and raised up by his holy aid, to revive afresh, in some degree, that spirituality of the Christian religion, which by the degeneracy of a lapsed and bewildered church had been almost lost, and buried in the rubbish of superstition."—*Quakerism Unmasked*, by Amicus, p. 67. York, 1839.

*"almost in despair,\* and in mighty trouble," reading his Bible incessantly, and "walking solitarily to wait upon the Lord." "He continued a long while in this condition, and in this miserable state went to London, in hopes of finding some relief among the great professors of that city." But they were "darkened in their understandings," and he left and went to Coventry, where he refused, though sorely tempted, to enlist as a soldier under the Protector; and he "took a room for awhile at a professor's house." After some time he went into his own country again, and was there about a year, "in great sorrow and trouble, and walking many nights by himself." Then he went to a priest in Warwickshire, and reasoned with him about the ground of despair and temptation; but the priest, being altogether ignorant of George's condition, "bid him take tobacco and sing psalms. But George signified that he was no lover of tobacco, and as for psalms, he was not in a state to sing." Hence he went away in sorrow "worse than he was when he came, seeing he found none that could reach his condition." After this he went to one Macham, a priest of high account; and he, no more skilful than the others, "was for giving George some physick and for bleeding him;*

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\* It will be seen that the morbid state of feeling which we term *Despair* (appropriately designated by a modern author "the paralysis of the soul") was, according to Fox's own showing, the cause of his and Muggleton's first "enlightenment." This Muggleton, it should be observed, was a wild fanatical blasphemer, who had afterwards many followers, who bore his euphonious name. He proclaimed himself the Judge of the world, sent to pass sentence of damnation upon all men.

"They were so deeply seized with despair," says Rev. C. Leslie, "that, like the possessed man in the Gospel, they forsook all human conversation, and retired into deserts, and solitary places, where they spent whole days and nights alone."—*The Snake in the Grass*, p. 331. London, 1698.

but they could not get one drop of blood from him, either in the arms or the head, his body being as it were dried up with sorrow grief and trouble, which were so great upon him, that he could have wished never to have been born, to behold the vanity and wickedness of men; or that he had been born blind, so that he might never have seen it, or deaf that he might never have heard vain or wicked words, or the Lord's name blasphemed." In 1646, as he was walking on a First-day morning, "it was discovered to his understanding that to be bred at Oxford and Cambridge was not enough to make a man to be a minister of Christ." "He took this to be a Divine revelation, and herein admired the goodness of the Lord." Now it opened to him, that God who made the world did not dwell in churches made with hands, and he left off congregational worship, preferring to read the Scriptures by himself in the fields and orchards, "seeking to be edified in solitariness." Soon afterwards he met with some frantic females, who had embraced a doctrine then prevalent—that women had no souls; and he commenced his teaching in a most orthodox manner, by telling them that they were wrong, for the Virgin Mary had said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Meeting with some "Dreamers," he affirmed that *there were three kinds of dreams: Multiplicity-of-business dreams; whisperings-of-Satan dreams; and whisperings-of-God to man dreams.* About this time, "he felt some drawings to go into Derbyshire."\* "But

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\* Three years subsequent to this period, during his imprisonment in the capital of that county, he was "under great exercise and trouble of spirit because of its wickedness," and he penned a woeful lamentation, from which the following is an extract: "O, Darby! as the waters run away when the floodgates are up, so doth the visitation of God's love pass away from thee, O Darby! . . . ."

*his troubles and temptations still continued, and he fasted much, and walked often abroad in solitary places, taking his Bible with him, and sitting in hollow trees, and lonesome places, until nightfall; and frequently in the night he walked mournfully about, being surrounded with many sorrows, in the times of the first workings of the Lord in him."* Fox was clothed in leather, for the simplicity of that dress, and partly because it was strong, and would want no mending. In 1647 he lost a friend and coadjutor, named Brown, after the burial of whom Fox *fell into such a condition that "he not only looked like a dead body, but unto many that came to see him he looked as if he had been dead really."* His visions were constantly of "Satan," an "Ocean of darkness," Ægypt, Babylon, Sodom, and the grave; which, being interpreted by the fanatics about him, simply meant that he had a "discerning spirit."

In 1648, it should be added, "*the virtues of the creatures were also opened to him; so that he began to deliberate whether he should practise physick for the good of mankind;*" and "the Lord forbade him to put off his hat to any men high or low, and he was required to 'thee' and 'thou' every man and woman, without distinction."\* But at length

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O Darby! thy professing and preaching stinks before the Lord.  
 . . . . . Thy women with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, &c., &c. . . . . O the deceit that is within thee! It doth even break my heart to see how God is dishonoured in thee O Darby!"—*Journal*, p. 46.

\* Fox records this year: "As I was sitting at a Friend's house in Nottinghamshire, *I saw there was a great crack to go throughout the earth, and a great smoke to go as the crack went; and after the crack there should be a great shaking. This was the earth in people's hearts which was to be shaken before the seed of God was raised out of the earth. And it was so; for the Lord's power began to shake them, and great meetings we began to have,*" &c.—*Journal*, p. 13.

"his sorrows and troubles began to wear off, and tears of joy dropped from him, so that he could have wept night and day with tears of joy and brokenness of heart. Still he was in a manner constantly quite clouded," haunted by visions, impressed with "the terrors of the Lord," and the fearful nature of His judgments; and this state of things more or less obtained during Fox's entire subsequent career.\*

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\* *Fox's Journal. The History of the Rise and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers*, by William Sewel. 4to. London, 1722.

Fox's illusions and hallucinations were most remarkable. He frequently saw "the sword of the Lord;" at another time "I had a vision of a desperate creature that was coming to destroy me, but I got victory over it."—(*Journal*, p. 250.) Again: "But being at Bandon there appeared to me in a vision a very ugly-visaged man, of a black and dark look. My spirit struck at him in the power of God, and it seems to me that I rode over him with my horse, and my horse set his foot on the side of his face. When I came down in the morning I told a friend the command of the Lord was to ride through Cork," &c.

At another time he beheld "a bear and two great mastiff dogs."—(*Journal* p. 407.) "I met Oliver Cromwell riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his Life-guard, I saw and felt a waft, or apparition of death, go forth against him; and when I came to him he looked like a dead man."—(*Journal*, p. 282.)

Fox's symptoms are very analogous to those of Mahomet, and hundreds of other religious fanatics, who have deemed themselves specially raised up by God for His peculiar service. Mahomet was constantly subject to dreams, and trances, and ecstasies. He would lie upon the ground in a half-senseless state. He heard voices calling upon him, and he swooned away in a "flood of light of intolerable splendour," as the angel announced to him, "Oh, Mahomet, of a verity thou art the prophet of God! and I am his angel Gabriel."

"Dr. Gustav Weil, in a note to *Mohammed de Prophet*, discusses the question of Mahomet's being subject to attacks of epilepsy; which has generally been represented as a slander of his enemies and of Christian writers. It appears, however, to have been

I have dwelt thus at length upon the early years of Fox's "convincement," in order to establish clearly to general apprehension, the charge which I make against this most miserable and deluded of men. He that runs may read, and satisfy himself that there is nothing unreasonable in the advancement of this charge. It may be as well to give another striking instance of Fox's hallucina-

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asserted by some of the oldest Moslem biographers, and given on the authority of persons about him. He would be seized, they said, with violent trembling, followed by a kind of swoon, or rather convulsion, during which perspiration would stream from his forehead in the coldest weather ; he would lie with his eyes closed, foaming at the mouth, and bellowing like a young camel. Ayesha, one of his wives, and Zeid, one of his disciples, are among the persons cited as testifying to that effect. They considered him at such times as under the influence of a revelation. He had such attacks, however, in Mecca, before the Koran was revealed to him. Cadijah feared that he was possessed by evil spirits, and would have called in the aid of a conjuror to exorcise him, but he forbade her. He did not like that any one should see him during these paroxysms. His visions, however, were not always preceded by such attacks. Hareth Ibn Haschem once asked him in what manner the revelations were made. 'Often,' he replied, 'the angel appears to me in a human form and speaks to me. Sometimes I hear sounds like the tinkling of a bell. [A ringing in the ears is a symptom of epilepsy ; and indeed Mahomet's attacks are accurate and truthful pictures of that malady.] When the individual angel has departed I am possessed of what he has revealed.' Some of his revelations he professed to receive direct from God, others in dreams ; for the dreams of prophets, he used to say, are revelations."—*The Life of Mahomet*, by Washington Irving. *Note to chapter VI.*

I think it is impossible to read the Life of the great and good Edward Irving, without coming to the conclusion that an incessant pondering upon the deep mysteries of religion, and a desire to know more than it will ever be permitted to us to know, in our present imperfect state, produced that sad mental deterioration which preceded the close of his eventful career.

tions. "So I went up and down," he says in his *Journal*, "the streets (of Lichfield), and into the market, crying with a loud voice, 'Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield!' As I went thus erylng through the streets there seemed to me a channel of blood running down the streets, and the market appeared a pool of blood. When I had declared what was upon me, and felt myself clear, I went out of the town in peace," &c. &c. "After this, a deep concern came upon me, for what reason I could be sent to cry against that city, and call it a bloody city. But afterwards I came to understand, that in the Emperor Dioclesian's time a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield. So I was to go without my shoes through the channel of their blood, and into the pool of their blood in the market place, that I might raise a memorial of the blood of those martyrs, which had been shed about one thousand years before, and lay cold in the streets."\*

A modern author, alluding to this and other extravagancies of the first Quaker apostle, mildly says: "It is evident, however, that George Fox, like many of his contemporaries, partook largely of the enthusiastic feelings of the age, and that his mind, at the time, must have been under the influence of strong excitement; but, as he was an extraordinary religious character, and conceived himself to be especially called to fulfil an important mission, *the safest conclusion is, that this act might have been required of him as a test of his faith and obedience!*"†

I do not hesitate to avow, that as far as I can read early Quaker history by the light of psychology, nearly all the perversions to Fox's creed were instances of a nervous and

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\* *Fox's Journal*, p. 49.

† *A popular Life of George Fox*, by Josiah Marsh, p. 67. London, 1847.

too highly exalted sensibility, the alternations of which are well known to be undue depression and despair. What can be more frightful, or more morbid, for instance, than the following picture?—"My mind seemed separated from my body, plunged into utter darkness, and towards the North or place of the North star; and being in perfect despair of returning any more, eternal condemnation appeared to inclose and surround me on every side, as in the centre of the horrible pit; never, never to see redemption thence, or the face of Him in mercy whom I had sought with all my soul."\*

But we return briefly to George Fox. His aggressions upon the conventionalisms, his violations of the amenities, of society; his belief in his own infallibility, and in the special prompting of the Holy Spirit for every extravagance which suggested itself to his delusional mind; the fierce denunciations of his wrath against every creed, and especially the clergy of the Established Church,—that "scabby flock of hirelings," as he politely called them; the general wildness of a look and bearing, which the observers of that day affirm to have "frightened people into belief"—all these things brought him into frequent contact with the authorities legalized for the preservation of order, and the maintenance of peace. "He went into churches," says the biographer of William Penn, "and disturbed the service.

\* *Journal of the Life of Thomas Story*, p. 13.

† The Rev. C. Leslie, who did battle manfully against Quakerism in his day, tells us, "that the origin of the Quakers was a company of poor ignorant country boys and women, journeymen, and maid-servants, tailors, weavers, &c., &c., who, breaking loose from their masters and mistresses, ran a religion hunting, as an easier trade, and of more prospect of gain, from the encouragement given them by the Act of Toleration in 1649-50."

In the midst of a sermon he would stand up and cry to the minister : ‘ This is not true gospel ; come down, thou deceiver ! ’ Brought before the magistrates he refused to take off his hat, pleading a direct command from God, not to uncover his head, or to make an obeisance to an equal ; and defended his conduct in the church with a rudeness and vehemence which, to men of education and refinement, savoured of insanity. The disturber was beaten and stoned by the rabble, pilloried, and imprisoned again and again by the magistrates.”\*

Nor was this to be wondered at. Such conduct was not of a kind to receive much consideration, or to claim immunity from penalties and persecutions—especially at the time when Quakerism first sprang into notice. It is not intended for a moment to contravene William Penn’s noble sentiment, that “ Whoever else is right, the persecutor *must* be wrong.” Indeed I cannot express too strongly the horror which I have of religious persecution, or the belief that it springs directly from the devil. Fox and his followers were undoubtedly the victims of it ; but he himself has had a place assigned to him by history, in the army of martyrs, to which he is not entitled. Any one who chooses to try what the law can do, and what protection she can yield to her well-behaved subjects, has only to set about doing what George Fox did under the influence of a wild enthusiasm. Both the law and the good sense of the community,—through its tremendous weapon the press—will teach him, that it is wiser, and more religious likewise, to be a well-conducted citizen than an extravagant pietist, or a narrow-minded and unsympa-

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\* *William Penn, an Historical Biography*, by W. Hepworth Dixon. London, 1851.

thizing bigot. A dissenting minister at Belfast was taught this not long since, when actuated, I doubt not, by the best motives, though displaying the most intolerable ignorance of human nature and social responsibility, he thought himself to be doing God service by risking a bloody riot, for the sake of (what was termed) a religious principle. There is an ecclesiastic in St. George's in the East now, rousing the entire parish, by ignoring the feelings, and estranging the sympathies, of his people, for the sake of a "miserable and childish" phylactery.

But there was no bound to Fox's labour, any more than there was to his intolerant and foul-mouthed language. He worked night and day ; he was scarcely ever at rest ; and his entire journal seems to bear evidence that he actually exulted in persecution. From prison to prison, from city to city, from England to Ireland, from Ireland to America, from America to Holland, this man went rejoicing, and bearing evidence to what he believed to be the truth.

It is difficult to understand how he found time to compose the various exhortations and epistles, and warnings, and doctrinal essays, which he has bequeathed to a Friendly posterity, and which constitute about the most extraordinary compound that ever emanated from a single pen. Nor is it easy to conceive how an illiterate and uneducated man, who, according to cotemporary testimony, could neither write grammatically nor spell decently,\*

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\* Mr. Leslie says : "The handwriting of George Fox, for I have seen it, is as bad as his spelling ; both equal to his sense and learning."

Fox's will, written in his own hand, is quite unique, and would seem to show that some one else must have penned his theological outpourings. The following are a few extracts : "S. Meade shall have my magnifying glas, and the torkell shell com and cace." "And

should have left for future generations some letters which are stamped with true Christian meekness, and bear quite an apostolic character. The greater part, however, of his writings, as those of his immediate followers, are either abusive tirades, or pompous paraphrasings of the Old and New Testaments—the former largely predominating. Nor was the learned author of the Apology exempt from this bombastic verbiage. It was after this style with every Quaker who put his pen to paper, or uttered oral prophesyings: “Howl, ye great ones, for the plagues are pouring out upon you! Howl, ye great ones, for recompense and vengeance is coming upon you.” Or a more subdued and colloquial type was—“In Him sit down, who is above the foxes in their holes, and the fowls of the air in their nests. I say, sit down in Christ.”\*

But the time drew near for departure to the “better country.” Trials, and persecutions, and imprisonments, could not last for ever; and they had visibly told upon a frame originally weak and feeble. It must be confessed that Fox’s exemplary private life, and his self-denying labours, and his uncompromising truthfulness, at last inspired all parties with respect and wonder.

“Of the integrity of his own character, as a Christian, he was so scrupulously tenacious, that when he might sometimes have been set at liberty by making trifling acknow-

Sary, thou give Sary Frickenfield half a gine for she hath been sarvesable to me a honest carefull young woman.” “And let Thomas Docker that knoweth many of my epestles and writen bookes *which he did wright for me* com up to London to assist frends in sorting of my Epeseles and other writings and give him a gine.” He speaks in it of “all his fisekall things” and “that thing that people do give glisters with,” &c. &c.

\* *Fox’s Journal*, p. 561.

ledgments, he would make none, lest it should imply a conviction that he had been confined for that which was wrong.”\* William Penn describes his friend as possessing the most awful and reverend frame he ever beheld. “His presence expressed a religious majesty.” As far as a turbulent and obstructive citizen can be blameless, friends and enemies concur in thinking George Fox was such. Everything he did he believed himself inspired by God to do. Hence, his sincerity was the measure of his mischief; and his mischief was the measure of his sincerity. He died in 1690, at the age of 67. His last, or nearly his last, words were: “Never heed. All is well. The seed or power of God reigns over all, and over death itself. Blessed be the Lord!”

There is no doubt that the cause of Quakerism was much strengthened by the accession to its ranks of “that mythical rather than historical person” (as Lord Macaulay names him), William Penn, “to describe whom is a task which requires some courage.” With a certain class of religionists and politicians he has been the subject of the most extravagant hero-worship. By another he has been very differently treated. As is generally the case where opinions on individual merit are so divided as to reach the extremes of latitude, a medium course, between these extremes, is most likely to be correct. He will serve our purpose merely to illustrate, by comparison with Fox, the position which we advance, that whatever may be the more outrageous indiscretions of an educated mind, there is certain to arrive to it, if it be not overbalanced, a time when judgment will re-assert her supremacy. If it be admitted that Fox was ever perfectly sane, it will be admitted

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\* *Portraiture of Quakerism*, by Thomas Clarkson, M.A. *Introduction*, p. xxx.

that he never displayed the least discretion, betrayed any knowledge of character,\* or much Christian sympathy towards those who differed from himself. It was not so with Penn. He lived to belie, by a more comprehensive wisdom, and a more rational and useful life, the religious extravagances of his earlier years. "Energetic as ever," says his biographer, speaking of him in conjugal retirement, after various imprisonments and persecutions, "in all that concerned his belief, there are yet traces of a mild and softening influence being at this time exercised over the polemic from Rickmansworth. His rebuke became milder, his form of abjuration somewhat less emphatic and severe. He was evidently growing a wiser and more useful man."†

He who had written: "Whilst the idle gormandizing priests of England run away with £150,000 a year, under pretence of God's ministers, no sort of people have been so universally the very bane of soul and body of the universe, as that abominable tribe, for whom the theatre of God's eternal vengeance is reserved to act their tragedy upon"‡—lived to record, in nobler language, a more noble sentiment. "However differing I am from other

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\* He was wont, however, constantly to claim for himself a knowledge of character, and a prophetic insight into the hearts of his followers. There are numberless instances of this recorded in his *Journal*, where he attributes to a supernatural power of introspection, what may be explained by the most ordinary principles of daily observation. He says (p. 99) "I cast my eye upon a woman, and discerned an unclean spirit in her," &c. The same perceptive power shows me many such an one whenever I walk down Regent Street, and reflect upon what is called "the great social evil."

† *William Penn, an Historical Biography*, by William Hepworth Dixon, pp. 54, 55.

‡ *The Guide Mistaken*, by William Penn, p. 18. London, 1668.

men *circa sacra*," he writes, "I know no religion that destroys courtesy, civility, and kindness." And again: "If thou thinkest twice before thou speakest, thou wilt think twice the better for it." And once more, in his *Reason against Railing*, he says: "They that are angry for God, passionate for Christ, may tell us they are true Christians, if they will, but be sure they are no Christians of Christ's making." He, too, who wrote: "Dissenters are an ill-bred pedantic crew, the bane of reason, and pest of the world; the old incendiaries of mischief; the best to be spared of mankind, against whom the boiling vengeance of an irritated God is ready to be poured out" &c. &c.\*—lived to pen that memorable letter to Archbishop Tillotson, in which he affirms: "I can only say—for I cannot join in a cry to ruin those I differ with—that I abhor two principles in religion, and pity those who hold them—obedience on mere authority, without conviction, and persecution of man on pretence of serving God. I think Union is best where the truth is clear; where not, Charity. I entirely agree with Hooker, that a few words spoken in meekness, humility, and love, are worth whole volumes of controversy, which commonly destroys Charity, the best part of Religion." I shall have occasion to refer more particularly to some of Penn's opinions, at a subsequent part of this Essay.

Associated with Penn in his early labours, and in his travels in England, Holland, and Germany, was the famous author of the standard work of Quakerism, *An Apology for the true Christian Divinity*, &c., a treatise originally written in Latin. Barclay was a really learned man, as also an educated gentleman; and the opinions recorded by him in the *Apology* have been adopted by

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\* *Quakerism, a New Nickname for Christianity*, by William Penn, p. 165.

orthodox Friends of every generation. He died at the early age of forty-two.\*

Having offered these preliminary observations upon the three men, whom, I suppose, most largely influenced the initiative of this strange theological system, let us proceed to enquire how it is that neither Fox, nor Penn, nor Barclay, nor the many earnest and good men upon whom their mantle has fallen, down to the present day, have been able, by individual or collective piety, to build a fabric capable of surviving the rude shocks of Time. Let us see how it has come to pass that an eclecticism of which Robert Barclay predicted: "Neither the art, wisdom, nor violence of men or devils, shall be able to quench that little spark that hath appeared; but it shall grow to the consuming of whatever shall stand up to oppose it. Though we are few in numbers in respect of others, and weak as to outward strength—the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"†—how it has come to pass, I say, that a system for which was foretold this career of augmenting grace, and undying vigour, has been reduced to a state of powerless inertia, and hopeless decadence.‡ Does the cause lie in an

\* A modern Quaker, in a sensible little brochure recently published, says, that Barclay's departure in the latter part of the *Apology*, from the catholic ground of his earlier propositions, has made it, "in spite of its great ability, nearly powerless for good beyond the limits of the Society, and at the same time productive of very great mischief within it."—*The Principle of Ancient Quakerism, &c.*, p. 26.

† *Apology*, p. 586. 8vo edit. London, 1703.

‡ The last Census of Religious Denominations in England and Wales, returns the number of Friends' Meeting Houses as 371, against 413, fifty years previously. But there has been a great falling off from the Society during the last eight years.

A recent traveller in Yorkshire says: "Whitby presents signs

increasing degeneracy of the Society's members? Does it lie in something wrong in the original constitution of the Society itself? Are we to seek for it in the Rules of Discipline and Government? or in some extraneous but appreciable influence?

I venture to think that a combination of these causes offers a satisfactory explanation of the decline of Quakerism; and that such combination may be redistributed into the following divisional arrangement:

I. *The visionary, unappreciable, and yet dangerous, character, of the fundamental doctrine of the Society, which gives precedence to the "Inward Testimony of the Spirit," and not to the "Revealed Scriptures."*

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of a social phenomenon which is observable in other places, the decline of Quakerism. I was invited to look at the Mechanics' Institute, and found it located in the Quakers' Meeting House. The town was one of George Fox's strongholds, and a considerable number of Quakers, including some of the leading families, remained up to the last generation. Death and secession have since then brought about the result above mentioned."—*A Month in Yorkshire*, by Walter White, p. 133. London, 1858.

Again, speaking of Wensleydale, he says: "The Quakers who were once numerous in the valley, have disappeared too."—*Ibid.* p. 287.

"In the year 1800 it was computed that the members of the Society of Friends in the whole of Great Britain, amounted to about 24,000. This includes Ireland, where a vigorous Society was formed in 1668, which holds its own national yearly meeting in Dublin, and sends representatives, since 1670, to the yearly meeting in London."—*Dictionary of Christian Churches and Sects*, by Rev. J. B. Marsden, M.A. New Edition, p. 452.

I believe that three or four years ago, the 24,000 had dwindled down to considerably less than 17,000; and a rapid decrease is still going on. The American Quakers number 120,000.

II. *The rejection of an organized and paid Ministry; and the recognition of the Immediate Inspiration of male and female Preachers, for the various occasions of Devotional Assembling.*

III. *The unsatisfying and unsubstantial character of the Society's form of worship.*

IV. *An absolute physical, mental, and moral deterioration, arising from the combined effects of frequent intermarriages, morbid "seriousness," and a too emotional and introverting Religion.*

V. *The singularly obstructive character of the Society's Socio-political relationship to the world—comprising the questions of the Lawfulness of Oaths, of War, and of Ecclesiastical Imposts; the peculiarities of Dress, Language, and Deportment; the prohibition of Sports and Amusements; the non-recognition of Distinctive Social Inequalities,\* and the prohibitions placed upon Trade.*

VI. *A general recognition on the part of best Friends, of the necessity of a higher Educational Standard, adapted to the requirements and the progressive Spirit of the Age—this recognition involving, as a matter of course, a repudiation of their "ancient principles," a fraternization with the World, and a consequent separation from Themselves.*

VII. *The exclusive character of the Society, and the system of disowning members for breach of Discipline; and its non-Proselytism.*

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\* This proposition, perhaps, of social inequality, will be disputed; but such was the inevitable tendency of "Ancient Quakerism."

VIII. *A growing conviction on the part of the most educated and enlightened Quakers, that the notorious material prosperity of the Society does not accord with its exalted spiritual profession, though it does not absolutely militate against the moral character of individual members.*

But, before entering upon the discussion of these headings, it may not be beside our purpose to observe, that the character of this great "Religious Movement" was hardly such as to enlist the respect or sympathies of the educated portion of the community. The vulgarity and intemperate zeal of its Founder; the wild fanaticism of his frantic followers; the turbulence and overbearing violence of all who were impressed with the divine nature of Fox's mission were of themselves sufficient to keep back from the new Religion all refined and well-regulated individuals. That which (upon cotemporary evidence) terrified many weak ones into embracing the Quaker creed, bade the stronger stand aloof from so strange, so unnatural, and so unrighteous a convulsion. It seemed marvellous to them that now, for the first time (according to the opinions of these neophytic Friends), should come Truth, to startle an ungodly generation. How unlike the Religion of the meek and lowly Saviour, was this Religion of the leather-aproned weaver's son! "Is not the man," says the pious Baxter, "either an infidel, and enemy to Christ, or stark mad with pride, that can believe that Christ had no Church till now, and that all the ministers of the Gospel for 1,600 years were the ministers of the devil (as they say of us that tread in their steps), and that we the Christians of that 1,600 years are damned (as now they dare denounce against those that succeed them), and that God made the world, and Christ died for it, with a purpose to save none

but a few Quakers, that the world never knew till a few years ago, or at least a few heretics that were their predecessors of old !”\*

There is scarcely anything more extraordinary than the conviction which has rested upon the minds of the Society of Friends, that their origin was direct from God, who specially raised up Fox for their establishment—for, in fact (as they believed), the initiation of Christianity. But surely we of these later times, who, by the light of reason, by a larger knowledge of mental phenomena, by a more extended acquaintance with the symptoms of emotional disturbance and depraved moral feelings, are enabled to decipher individual man, and societies of men, may ask of the few remaining Friends who cling to an hereditary Faith, to compare the language and temper of Fox and his immediate disciples, with the language and temper of an earlier Founder of Christian Verity, and more lowly disciples, who received their mission direct from the Son of God. How could this later fruit have sprung from that earlier tree? Why should not the testimony of Mahomet be as much relied upon as that of Fox? Their physical and mental symptoms of disease were somewhat analogous; their illusions and hallucinations were similar. And the Eastern Prophet gave utterance to a more lowly sentiment, and yielded larger evidence of Christian humility, than did the Western Cobbler, when he said, under the strongest impress of his divine and prophetic character, “Neither shall I enter into Paradise unless God cover me with His mercy.” What more charitable thing can we say (and, indeed, what does the history of mankind more clearly demonstrate?), than that neither Fox nor Mahomet

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\* *Epistle prefixed to Baxter's Quakers' Catechism.*

have been raised up by God for a special purpose ; but that they have been permitted to exist (as other anomalies are suffered to exist, and other scourges are perpetuated), because it is no part of the divine and providential scheme which everywhere embraces us, to interfere with the natural development of even that which brings scandal upon God's Divinity and God's Truth ?

We proceed now to the consideration of the separate heads of that divisional arrangement which we have previously indicated.

*I. The visionary, unappreciable, and yet dangerous, character, of the fundamental doctrine of the Society, which gives precedence to the "Inward Testimony of the Spirit," and not to the "Revealed Scriptures."*

Quakers are of opinion that the Spirit of God is given to every man, in varying kinds and degrees ; that this Spirit can alone enable him to discern Divine Truth as revealed in Scripture ; and that this inward guide or monitor is the fountain-head from which Scripture has proceeded, and is, therefore, superior to Scripture itself. Barclay's words in the third proposition of his *Apology* are : " Nevertheless, because they (the Scriptures) are only a declaration of the Fountain, and not the Fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners."

Which is really tantamount to saying: however highly we may think of the Scriptures, and how great soever may be the estimate which we have of their truth, it is competent for any person who is impressed with the idea that God has gifted him with spiritual discernment, to supersede the authority, and put any interpretation which may please

him upon the letter, of Scripture. This, in fact, is what the early Quakers—this is what George Fox in particular—did ; and the belief gave rise to some of the most blasphemous productions that ever issued from the pen of man. And it will be necessary for me hereafter to cite a few instances, in order to bear out the statement which I am making, and show to those who are not familiar with the early literature of the Society of Friends, the disreputable trash, the coarse vulgarity, the profane dogmatizings, which can claim a divine origin, in times of rampant fanaticism and over-weening spiritual pride. Having stated, then, that Quakers give precedence to the varying “witness of the Spirit” over the written and unvarying record of God’s Word ; and that the former, in having existed prior to the latter, should constitute the primary Rule and Standard of Faith, we will state some of their other reasons for maintaining this fundamental dogma of their creed. They affirm (what is very true) that the Scriptures have neither a verbal nor a collective perfection ; that many are stated to have been lost, and there are uncertainties and disputations as to those which have been handed down to us. What one Christian Council has received another has rejected. “Add to this, that none of the originals are extant. And of the copies some have suffered by transcription, others by translation, and others by wilful mutilation, to support human notions of religion, so that there are various readings of the same passage and various views of the same thing.” These things being so, we are convinced that there is a purer antecedent Revelation, dwelling in each man’s own heart. That is the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is the inward Testimony ; it is the Holy Spirit, and constitutes to its individual possessor the standard and the gauge of Truth.

Now, without attempting to claim for Scripture a

greater importance than it is entitled to, by making it (as many do, to their own great peril) a court of appeal in matters which are far beyond the range of Theology, it is obvious to what abuse the Sacred Volume may be exposed by the admission of this doctrine of individual interpretation, without reference to the general capacity of the individual interpreter. If one will not hear the voice of collective authority and tradition, at least let him give some measure of heed to the light of collateral knowledge and reason. But if there be no knowledge, because reason has never been exercised, and the faculties have never been educated, what wild fancies may not possess even the most devout man who believes himself endowed from above by the light of spiritual discernment ! What he sees to-day he may not see to-morrow. The sacredness of the vision of one hour, the testimony of the indwelling Spirit, may be in the inverse ratio of the enthusiast's physical integrity ; whilst in proportion to the healthiness of his animal secretions may be his freedom from vitiated sentiments in another. It is not to be believed that any amount of desire for Truth, and knowledge of the "many things hard to be understood"—that any amount of prayer or pious ejaculation will secure to an utterly ignorant man the least insight into what he craves to understand, unless he avails himself of the many means placed at his disposal for enlarging his mental capacity, and thereby extending, in one sense, the limits of his faith. How prone are even the educated "over-righteous" to pray for "more grace," whilst they have a large stock in hand of available material, which they are too indolent to turn to a practical account, though they might pave therewith a beautiful highway on which Grace could run her chariot-wheels. Lord Palmerston got the credit of being profane, when he told the Edinburgh peti-

tioners for a "Form of national prayer" for keeping away the cholera, that they had better attend to their drainage, and improve the general character of their habits and their dwellings. But the Prime Minister was right in urging them not to leave "Providence to settle that" (to adopt a happy expression of Miss Martineau) which they had abundant power to settle for themselves. And so is he right who tells an ignorant but devotional boor that he is not likely to know anything of the parables of the Gospel, or the perplexing subtleties of the Epistles, unless some man explain them. Not his "religious experiences," nor his moral perceptions, nor his intellectual endowments, are sufficient to justify his becoming his own interpreter. For, literally, he has none of these things. And yet hundreds of the illiterate and vulgar-minded have claimed this power, and by its fanatical exercise have brought the greatest scandal upon Religion, and especially upon the creed of the gentle enthusiasts whose dilapidated spiritual fortunes we are now considering.

The history of all Fanaticism boldly negatives the idea of an "Inward Light" sufficient for the purposes of controversial teaching; and, above all, indicates that while the most beautiful feature of Christ's Gospel is Charity, the most repulsive, and, at the same time, the most prominent, features of Fanaticism are self-confidence and spiritual pride.\*

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\* It will be admitted that there is more of spiritual pride than charity in the following choice expressions gleaned from Fox's own writings:—

It should be remembered that he generally began his epistles: "The Word of the Lord to you," &c., and that the annexed terms were usually applied to the Protestant clergy, against whom he had the most virulent antipathy. "Conjurors," "thieves," "robbers," "Antichrists," "witches," "devils," "scarlet-coloured beasts,"

"Theology," says the great Hooker, "what is it but the science of things divine? What science can be attained unto without help of natural discourse and reason?" And that brightest ornament of Friends, Joseph John Gurney himself says: "Certain it is that much of our dissatisfaction on religious points, much of our impious doubting, is owing to our not sufficiently yielding up our reason and our souls to the will of God." And Jeremy Taylor writes: "It is a strange boldness and pertness of spirit, so to trust every fancy of my own, as to put the greatest interest upon it; and so to be in love with every opinion and trifling conceit, as to value it beyond the peace of the Church, and the wiser customs of the world, or the laws and practices of a wise and well-instructed community of men."\*

But if it is not competent to this man, by reason of his uneducated condition, to shape out for himself a faith of individual interpretation; it is equally competent to another, who has carefully studied the letter of Holy Writ, and whose general education, and acknowledged

"bloodhounds," "lizards," "moles," "greenheaded trumpeters," "wheelbarrows," "gimcracks," "whirlpools," "whirligigs," "moon-calves," "tatterdemalions," "serpents," "vipers," "ministers of the devil," "devils incarnate," "devil-driven dungy gods," &c., &c.

To T. Bushel, the Ranter, he said: "Repent, thou beast."—*Journal*, p. 54.

Edward Burroughs was one of the most noted of the early Quakers. He was termed "a chief-pillar of the Church," and "a great breaker-up of stony hearts." His writings are full of abusive language. The following is a specimen: "Thou (Philip Bennett, a priest) art a wicked creature. Blackness of darkness is reserved for thee. Thou art a serpent, and the curse of God is eternally upon thee. Thou beast, to whom the plagues of God are due."

\* *Jeremy Taylor's Works*, vol. xii., p. 73.

powers, give him the right to exercise his reason, and weigh the respective merits of the countless creeds which have been elaborated from Scripture, to determine for himself what is most required for the sustained healthfulness of his moral and spiritual nature. We are so constituted by God that, in things which are not clear to demonstration, essentially different conclusions will be drawn from the same premises, and absolutely antagonistic interpretations be put upon the same passages of Revelation. No collective authority, no hoary tradition, will convince some; the minimum of authority and tradition will convince others. And in each case, be it observed, the belief is, after all, an exercise of private judgment. If you believe the Church, and nominally distrust yourself, you have actually trusted yourself to decide that the Church is worthy of credit, and capable of truthful exposition. If you reject the authority of the Church you are but still exercising private judgment in deciding that the Church is unworthy of being appealed to as an authority. Having admitted this much, it is obvious that the strongest and most reasonable conviction of a truth eliminated from Scripture by one, may not admit of apprehension by another. This fact influences and colours, not only the minutiae of creeds, but even the great and sublime Verity upon which hangs the salvation of man. The doctrine of the Atonement has to you a "wrath-appeasing"—to me a "reconciliatory"—character. Call it faithlessness—call it what you will; but it is a fact arising from those mental idiosyncrasies with which it has pleased God to individually endow us. If I do not persist in pressing my opinions upon you, it is due to me that you keep silence. I am as solicitous about the truth as yourself. There is a point beyond which you have no right to go, for it should be remembered

(as Mr. Buckle eloquently expresses it) "that a creed which is good for one man may not be good for another; that you dare not dogmatize on the most mysterious subjects, tamper with the most sacred principles of the human heart, and darken with its miserable superstitions those sublime questions that no one should rudely touch, because they are for each according to the measure of his own soul; because they lie in that unknown tract which separates the finite from the infinite, and because they are as a secret and individual covenant between man and his God." \*

It is hard, indeed, as things really exist around us, and as our faith is perplexed on every side, to steer the right path through Scriptural difficulties, and through the disjunctive teachings of the various Christian Churches. We have no need to increase our embarrassments by appealing to capricious emotions (which are more or less indications of our weakness rather than our strength), as peculiar manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

See what has come of this minute anatomizing of revealed Truth. As men are prone to follow the bent of their respective tastes, inherited or acquired, in the selection of a particular profession, in the indulgence of certain pursuits, or in adopting special courses of reading and study; so they have been inclined, according to their respective moral and intellectual organizations, to deal with insulated passages of Holy Writ. One or other, or sundry passages, harmonize with this man's preconceived views (and, of course, what may be said of the individual, may be said equally of the aggregate of individuals). He dwells upon them constantly; he twists them into

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\* *History of Civilization in England*, by Henry Thomas Buckle, p. 469. London, 1857.

unreasonable and (by others) unappreciable relationships. He forces them unduly, until the exuberance of their growth starves and impedes the maturation of other passages, of at least an equally comprehensive character.\* Believing in the plenary or verbal inspiration of the absorbing passages, he is not able to recognize the fact, that the various Scriptural writings are stamped in a large measure with individualities of character, and the general weakness incidental to the medium of humanity. Who, for instance, cannot see in the writings of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles that unclouded confidence which is so often characteristic of sudden conversion?—"for I *know* whom I have believed, and am *persuaded* that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Truly there is no book requiring greater study, and more freedom from prejudice in that study, whether you believe (as many do, and thereby perplex themselves) that every word is for eternal truth, and for eternal service ; or whether

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\* "On all questions relating to the alleged practical influence of opinions, the rational enquiry plainly is—Not what seems the tendency of single elements of the system ; but in what manner are its various elements balanced and harmonized? Who does not know that effects are, in every case, whether physical or intellectual as the *combined causes* which concur to produce them? If at any time certain ingredients of religious truth have been drawn apart and greatly abused, to the injuries of the parties themselves, and to the scandal of others, the fault is not in the inspired Book. The sacred writers require nothing short of a submission to that *complete and duly-adjusted system* of motives which they promulgate ; and it would have been a virtual dereliction of their authority to have made provision against the misuse of those *single principles* which can produce no mischief so long as they are held in combination."—*Fanaticism*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 321. London, 1853.

you believe such a doctrine to be essentially injurious to the spread of true religion. In "the volume of volumes" are, indeed, many "things hard to be understood," which have baffled millions; as its truths of beautiful plainness and touching simplicity have yielded consolation to millions, who have gone out without fear into the great and untried future. It has been so from its first revelation; it is so now; it will be so to the end. The *Æthiopian* will not change his skin, nor the leopard his spots. And so it has come to pass, here in England—Christian England self-reputed to be so much *more* Christian than other countries, we are flooded with different sects, animated by that dangerous gift—pious but untempered zeal, all of whom have a special aptitude for advancing insulated texts, in support of their respective theological dogmas.

Thus upon one or more passages have been founded a belief in the Eternal Oneness of the Deity; upon one or more an acceptance of the Triune Godhead. Upon one or more a belief in the Predestination by God of some men to everlasting misery; whilst there are not wanting those which seem to enforce the doctrine of Universal Salvation. Upon one or more is based a belief in the material Presence of our Lord's body and blood, in the sacrament of his Communion. Upon the same is founded an acceptance of the spiritual Presence only of the crucified Redeemer. Upon the same, too, and others, is founded the doctrine that this sacrament is merely a memorial rite, which it is wise not altogether to neglect, but which ought in no way to be associated with either the material or special spiritual presence, in the Eucharistic Elements, of "the Great Sufferer." Whilst the sect whose merits we are now discussing denies the necessity of any ritual participation in bread and wine, at the same time fully apprehending

the needfulness of *spiritually supping* with the Lord. Upon one or more has been built the propriety of Community of goods and possessions, and the Universality of the Spirit; upon others a recognition of different Orders in society, and differing degrees in wealth. By one or more is acknowledged the notion of silent spiritual "waiting," periodically accompanied by "groanings" which can, as well as "groanings which cannot, be uttered," and tremblings and quakings of a highly demonstrative character.\*

By others is made equal acknowledgment of uniform soberness of speech and bearing, in prayer, in exposition, and in praise, in our communions with the Eternal God. Upon one or more has been founded an adoption of female

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\* "Sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting; and there will be such an inward travail while each is seeking to overcome the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers (like the going of two contrary tides) every individual will be strongly exercised, as in a day of battle; and thereby trembling and motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all: which, as the power of truth prevails will from pangs and groans end with a sweet sound of thankfulness and praise."—*Barclay's Apology*, p. 359. "Those in their assemblies that are taken with these quaking fits, fall suddenly down, as it were in a swoon, as though they were in epilepsy, and lie grovelling on the earth, struggling as it were for life, and sometimes more quietly, as though they were departing. While the agony of their fits is on them, their lips quiver, their flesh and joints tremble, their bellies swell as though blown with wind; they foam at the mouth, &c. When the fit leaves them they roar out horribly, with a voice greater than the voice of a man; the noise is a fearful noise; it is a very horrid fearful noise, and greater sometimes than any bull can make."—*Brief Narrative of the Irreligion of the Northern Quakers*, by Francis Higgins, p. 15. The above is a perfect description of a bad hysterical paroxysm, accompanied by the well-known *globus hystericus*.

loquaciousness as an article of creed, and a conviction of female "ministerial giftings." There is not one of these opinions which may not be more or less supported by Scriptural insulations: and it is no exaggeration to say, that by the disjunctive teaching of God's word, without due reference to its entirety, and those facts about which almost all Christians are agreed, have arisen those divisional janglings, those numberless sects and creeds, which have alike perplexed earlier and more immediate, as they will be certain to perplex future, generations.\*

Nor is this all. There have been thousands of men, earnest, active, pious, sincere, ever solicitous to find that "one Body and one Spirit" which, discovered, would be the type of perfect peace—men who have made the Scriptures their chief study, with prayer, and humility, and have yet been unable to build thereupon an enduring fabric; but, startled at last by conflicting opinions, by the history of religious persecution, by the violence of religious partizanship, and by the practical denials of Christ, manifested by some who bear his sacred name, and who have been reputed to be the peculiar depositaries of abundant grace, have made shipwreck of their Faith, and ended by rejecting all Revealed Religion.

How is all this to be remedied but by greater uniformity of conduct, worthy of the teaching of the New Dis-

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\* "Il n'y eut jamais aucune heresie pour si profane qu'elle fût, qui ne se soit appuyée sur des paroles formelles de l'Ecriture sainte. C'est un pays de conquête que la Bible; une forest esgalement ouverte aux larrons et aux buscherons; une prerie comme aux faucheurs pour y trouver de l'herbe, aux cicoignes pour y trouver des serpens, et aux asnes pour y trouver des chardons."—*Garasse, Doctrine Curieuse*, p. 184 (quoted in Southey's *Common-place Book*).

pensation, and by larger charity, and more conciliating love? How but by giving up this constant "doting about questions, and strife of words?" How but by discovering our *individual* "necessities before we ask," so as to modify, in some sense, "our ignorance in asking?" As long as we are content to be mere Bibliolaters or dreamy Spiritualists, overlooking and overleaping the practical part of the Christian life, and are pleased to dogmatize where it is given to none to dogmatize, mysticize ourselves with what is sufficiently plain, and darken what is already puzzling and obscure, God's word will be torn to tatters, and God's people tossed upon a sea of doubt and discord.

Can anything be conceived more prejudicial to Religion, or more hurtful to some of those minds which are alone capable of embracing large and comprehensive truths, than to be forced into the consideration of some wretched dogma which need be of no importance to any one—not in any sense necessary to his creed, and exercising no influence whatever upon the practice of Christian principles? It is bad and dangerous enough to be reduced to quibbling about "Consubstantiation" and "Transubstantiation." But how miserably childish to be called upon to view as solemn verities, indicated by the Holy Spirit, trivial and incidental allusions made by men whose frailties are as evident as their inspiration! These are the foolish and dangerous tools with which Quakers have been playing for two centuries—"words without knowledge, by which understanding hath been darkened."

What does it matter to me that "there was silence in Heaven for half an hour"? or that "Job sat silent for seven days"?\* or that "Philip had four daughters which

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\* These are two of the texts on which Quakers found the doctrine of *silent worship*.

did prophesy"?\* or that "widows when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ will marry"? But it matters a great deal to me—for my all hangs upon it—that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and that "God is Love."

Are not these Great Truths sufficient? O yes! And having embraced them, "a good life" (to adopt the words of Dr. Samuel Brown) "becomes the truest and most beautiful Theology."

It is not more singular than it is inconsistent, that, considering the primary importance attached by Quakers to the subordinate position of the Scriptures, as proceeding from the Spirit of Truth, and not being the Spirit of Truth itself, they are yet willing to acknowledge (in Barclay's own words) "as a positive certain maxim, that

\* This is one of the texts upon which they justify occasional prophesying. The following is a fair specimen of the manner in which they are wont to exercise this gift: it was delivered in Ireland by one John Hall, a visitor there from England, and is worthy of Dr. Cumming.

"My friends, I am come in the dread and fear of the Great and Almighty God, to proclaim the great and terrible day of the Lord amongst you, that is coming, and is come, upon all sin and wickedness. Haste to repentance, I beg it of you, lest the day come upon you at unawares; and remember that you are this day warned to the salvation of God; and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, God will be clear of your blood. And unto this I am concerned to add, that *a terrible and grievous plague will God send into this your land and nation, that shall sweep away thousands of its inhabitants; they shall lie dead in their houses, and dead in the streets; there shall scarcely be a people living found willing to bury them, their stench shall be so great.* O, repent and turn from your evil ways that God may show you mercy." *The Rise and Progress of the people called Quakers in Ireland*, by Thomas Wight, and John Rutty. 4th edit., p. 214. London, 1811.

whatsoever any do, pretending to the Spirit, which is contrary to the Scriptures, be accounted and reckoned a delusion of the devil.”\* This admission itself condemns the entire early Quaker literature, and the monstrous extravagances of Fox and his immediate followers. Nay, out of Barclay’s own mouth may Barclay himself be condemned. For if it is true that the fruits of the Spirit are clearly defined to be “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” how can the great Apologist reconcile therewith his own virulent and intemperate language? Speaking of the clergy, he says: “They are so glued to the love of money that there is none like them in malice, rage, and cruelty. If they be denied their hire they rage like drunken men, fret, fume, and, as it were, go mad.” “If thou owest them ought and refusest to pay it, then nothing but war will they thunder against thee, and they will send thee to hell without mercy.”† He calls the clergy also “Anti-christian hirelings, full of rage and malice.” And what are we to say to the following, selected out of hundreds of similar extracts which might be produced, if necessary, from the early writings of Friends?

“To the King and both houses of Parliament, *thus saith the Lord*: ‘Meddle not with my people because of their conscience to me, and banish them not out of the nation because of their conscience; for if ye do I will send my plagues upon you, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.’

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\* And yet Barclay contradicts himself here, as in all his propositions; for he says elsewhere: “The teachings of the Universal Saving Light are not necessarily to be subjected to the test of either the outward testimony of Scripture, or the natural reason of man.”—*Apology*, p. 223.

† *Apology*, p. 339.

*Written in obedience to the Lord by his servant, George Bishop. Bristol, the 25th of the 9th mo. 1664.*"\*

"Such as differ from us differ from Christ. You all, priests and teachers, who call yourselves ministers since the days of the apostles, who inwardly are ravened from the Spirit of God, are turning and have turned all people from the light to the darkness; and so have kept thousands and millions of souls in damnation, and turning them and keeping them in the path and way unto hell."†

"If ever you own the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, you will own our writings, which are given forth by the same spirit and power."‡

"You might as well condemn the Scriptures to the fire as our Queries. . . . *You are answered from the Mouth of the Lord.*"§

Fox ends one of his epistles thus: "From him who is translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, with all his saints," &c.

"Quakers can discern who are saints, who are devils, and who apostates, without speaking even a word. They have the Word of God, Christ, which is eternal and infallible, in their hearts, to judge persons and things."||

"So all the preachers for tythes and money, and the takers and payers of tythes, be testified against in the Lord's power and Spirit; and therefore in the power of the Lord, maintain the war against the beasts."¶

\* *Sewel's History of Quakers*, p. 439.

† *Great Mystery*, by George Fox, p. 267.

‡ *Answer to the Westmoreland Petition*, by George Fox, p. 30.

§ *Truth's Defence*, by George Fox, p. 104.

|| *Great Mystery*, by George Fox, p. 89.

¶ *Decretal Epistle against Tythes*, by George Fox, 3rd mo. 1667.

"Slay Baal; Balaam must be slain. All the hirelings must be turned out of the kingdom."\*

"All Christendom hath talked long enough of Christ's flesh and blood."†

The above are a few extracts from the writings of one, to prove whose infallibility William Penn wrote (in his *Winding Sheet*) 30 pages; and of whom the same author and Thomas Ellwood (vide Penn's *Rise and Progress*, &c., and Ellwood's *Testimony of George Fox*, prefixed to the *Journal* of the latter) recorded: "He was the first and chief elder in this age; a man though not of elegant speech, or learned after the way of this world, yet endued with a wonderful depth in Divine wisdom." "His matter was very profound." "He was a discerner of other men's spirits, and very much a master of his own; he had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures, but above all he excelled in prayer." "*He was sound in judgment, able and ready in giving, discreet in keeping counsel; of an innocent life; no busybody, nor touchy, nor critical.*" Two or three extracts from other Quaker writings will be sufficient for the object we have in view:—

"Faith in the history of Christ's outward manifestation has been a deadly poison these latter ages have been infested with."‡

"The sufferings of Friends, the people of God, in this age, are greater sufferings, and more unjust than the sufferings of Christ and his Apostles. What was done to Christ and the Apostles, was chiefly done by a law, and in great part by the due execution of a law."§

\* *News Coming out of the North*, by George Fox, p. 31.

† *Spreading of Truth*, by George Fox, p. 59.

‡ *Quakerism, a New Nickname for Christianity*, by William Penn, p. 146.

§ *Edward Burroughs's Works*, p. 273.

“Your imagined God beyond the stars, and your carnal Christ, is utterly denied.”\*

“The Pope, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, Independents, and Baptists, understand the blood of Christ no more than a brute beast.”†

“‘I know nothing of Christ but within myself,’ was the language of Thomas Curtis, a preacher for forty years among the early Friends.”‡

Some of George Fox’s anathemas against the Pope are of so frightful a character that it is undesirable to transcribe them. Yet the great historian of Quakerism, speaking of one of the worst of these anathemas, says: “These are but *small particles* of that flame which George Fox blew against the Pope, intermixing his writings with many demonstrations that the Popish Church was the whore of Babel.”§

Now it must be confessed that the contradictory and inconsistent statements of the Society of Friends are most perplexing. As to the Jew “suffering is the badge of all our race,” to the Quaker inconsistency is the badge of all their tribe. What, for instance, can be more strange than to place the “Inward Testimony” above the “Written Re-

\* *The Sword of the Lord drawn*, by Christopher Atkinson, p. 5.

† *Burnet’s Principles of the People called Quakers* (*Letter from Solomon Eccles*), p. 41. London, 1668. This was the same Eccles that said: “The blood of Christ was no more than the blood of any other saint.” (*Leslie*.)

‡ *Leslie’s Works*, vol. ii., p. 236.

§ *The History of the People called Quakers*, by W. Sewel, p. 408.

“Christ coming in the flesh was but a figure.” and Fox also said amongst thousands of blasphemies: “He that hath the spirit that raiseth up Jesus from the dead is equal with God.”—(*Saul’s Errand to Damascus*.) Peun affirmed that “the light of Christ within is the efficient cause of salvation, completely taken.”—(*Christian Quaker*.) When a fanatical woman burnt a Bible Fox said: “she was over-zealous but well-meaning.”

cord," and then quibble about the petty trivialities of dress and manner, because certain incidental allusions are made to these matters in Scripture? Literally, in spite of their fundamental doctrine, "plain teaching," a too literal interpretation of passages which contain nothing doctrinal, has done as much towards precipitating the Society to its present condition as anything else. Its members have failed to perceive that "all questions on religious subjects, howsoever, and by whomsoever, put, must be viewed relatively to time, character, circumstances, and opportunities." They have too rigidly adhered to Scriptural words (containing no precepts, and involving no doctrine) in matters of the most trivial character; ignoring the fact that primitive manners and primitive customs, however sacred their origin (if ever that could be proved), and however adapted to earlier and less enlightened periods of our history, are manifestly unworthy of an age of transition and progress.

So, again, is inconsistency evidenced in reference to the passages which I have previously quoted from the writings of Fox, and other accredited authorities of the Society's initiatory period.

I appeal to any man of ordinary education, whether it would be possible to express more offensive and blasphemous sentiments in more offensive and blasphemous language. And yet we are asked to accept all this as dictated by that Holy Spirit which is superior to the written Word of God.

Of course it occurred to me that Friends would now repudiate their early literature and these uninviting dogmas. But I do not find, on consulting the *Rules of Discipline*, that this is the case. It is there affirmed that, "as a religious body, we are the same people our forefathers were, in faith, in doctrine, in worship, in ministry, and in

discipline.”\* It is also there stated: “We earnestly recommend to all the frequent perusal of the Holy Scriptures, according to repeated exhortations; and we at this time *also recommend the writings of our faithful predecessors, and the accounts that are published of their experiences, labours, travels, and sufferings in the cause of Christ.*”† I will rest the objection which I raise to this avowal, upon the great Quaker narrative—Fox’s own *Journal*; and I protest, that it would be impossible to put into the hands of a young person of pure and uncontaminated mind, a more demoralizing and pestilential compound than this much vaunted volume.

But it is stated also in the *Rules of Discipline*, p. 67, (and this is the inconsistency which is so irreconcilable with what has been before recorded), “The preservation of love is a duty in every state of religious attainment; and did we faithfully observe the great Master’s precept of doing to others as we would they should do to us, its practice would be easy. Detraction and enmity would then be destroyed in the seed, and that excellent Christian charity, recommended by the Apostle, prevail over all.”

It should be observed, too, that this avowal of holding to the entire creed and opinions of first Quakers; the exhortation to peruse for the soul’s benefit the early literature of the Society; and this inculcation of Christian charity, were respectively recorded within a short period of each other, and have received the stamp of general approval in the Society’s last edition (1834) of its *Rules of Discipline*.

These things, then, being so, and these foul anathemas and unholy denunciations being handed down to us as the

\* *Preface to Rules of Discipline*, p. iii. (last edition). London, 1834.

† *Rules of Discipline*, p. 29.

immediate dictations of the Divine Spirit, by a people, whose creed—or at least a part whose creed—is, that the purest form of speech is “yea, nay;” that “blessed are the peacemakers;” that “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” &c.—what conclusion are we to arrive at as to the consistency of their Religion, or the strange kind of uniformity which must spring therefrom? And am I not right in saying that the decline of Quakerism is in a large measure owing to the recognition of the doctrine of “Immediate Spiritual Revelation,” being superior to that written Revelation which *we* call “Scripture,” and which we believe, above all things, to be of priceless value? Is it not a doctrine which I am right in terming “unappreciable,” inasmuch as the immense majority of Christians see and feel the impossibility of receiving it, because of its inevitable tendency to perversion by weak and ignorant Fanatics.

Truly it has been said that this form of delusion should excite pity rather than provoke rebuke; and that it calls for the skill of the physician, more than for the instruction of the theologian. “The limits of insanity have not yet been ascertained; perhaps it has none: and certainly there are facts that favour the belief that the interval between common weakness of judgment and outrageous madness is filled up by an insensible gradation of absurdity, nowhere admitting of a line of absolute separation. Where, for example, shall we pause, and separate the sane from the insane among those who believe themselves to be favoured perpetually with special, particular, and ultra-scriptural revelations from Heaven? The most modest enthusiast of this class, and the most daring visionary, stand together on the same ground of outlawry from common sense and Scriptural authority; and though their several offences against truth and sobriety may be of

greater or less amount, they must both be dealt with on the same principle; for both have alike excluded themselves from the benefit of appeal to the only authorities known among the sane part of mankind, namely reason and Scripture; those who reject both surrender themselves over to pity—or compulsion. It would manifestly be better that men should be left to the darkness and wanderings of unassisted reason, than that they should receive the immediate instructions of Heaven, *unless they possess at the same time a public and fixed rule to which all such supernatural instructions are to be conformed, and by which they are to be discriminated*; for the errors of reason, how great soever they may be, carry with them no weight of Divine authority: but if the doctrine of Divine communications be admitted, and admitted without reference to a public and permanent standard of truth, then every extravagance of impiety may claim a Heavenly origin; and who shall venture to rebuke even the most pestilent error; for how shall the reprover assure himself that he is not fighting against God.”\*

And there is another development and extension of this doctrine which ought not to be altogether unnoticed. There have been many sections, indeed, of the Christian Church more or less obnoxious to the charge of a belief in special personal “providences” of a supernatural character, and of spiritual guidances in all the temporal concerns of life. And, as might have been expected, there has been no doctrine more productive of absolute infidelity with a class of persons whose minds have imbibed anything of a too ratiocinative or sceptical tendency; and of the most

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\* *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, by Isaac Taylor, 10th edit. London, 1845, pp. 67-8.

acute misery in another class, who have fallen within the influence of a highly nervous and morbid pietism.

To such a height had this evil grown about fifty years ago, and to such a mischievous and impious extent had it been elaborated in the pages of the *Evangelical* and *Methodist Magazines*, that Sydney Smith was induced to expose it, in his inimitable manner, in the *Edinburgh Review*. The doctrine alluded to peculiarly characterizes Quakers and Methodists, and all religious persons who have become so blinded with the dazzling and overpowering sense of the *Great First Cause*, as to lose all appreciation of the general uniformity of His action through the medium of *secondary causes*, by and through which the affairs of this life are alone guided and regulated. If indeed they are regulated in any other way than by a uniform fixity of purpose, which is written so legibly that it may be read, and by a harmonious adaptation, which enable us to connect together effects with their legitimate antecedent causation—history becomes worthless, experience valueless, and all progress of general and scientific character useless.

Mr. Clarkson says, in the dreariest of dreary books, that it is the doctrine of Quakerism on the subject of the Spirit, that it is an infallible guide to men in their spiritual concerns. But he is unable to discover from Quaker writings that it is to be a guide to man in the temporal concerns of life. And he adds (what is very true) that George Fox was very apprehensive that even in matters of religion, which constitute the immediate province of the Divine Spirit, men might mistake their own enthusiastic feelings for revelations; and he censured some “for having gone out into imaginations.”\* Now I

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\* *Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol iii., pp. 237-8.

confess to a great waste of time during the past five months in having waded through early, and indeed more recent, Quaker literature, where I have met (in the former) with more ribald blasphemy, and (in the latter) with more morbid and pseudo-religious sentimentalism, than I had thought it possible any persons could have deliberately placed upon record. And I am bound to say, that if there is one doctrine more than another stamped upon those records, it is that of direct spiritual guidance in temporalities, and constant personal interferences on the part of the Deity, by acts of arbitrary cruelty, and petty annoyance, which you or I would be ashamed to perpetrate.

Whatever Fox's fears about others "running out into imaginations," his own Journal yields abundant evidence of the extravagant nature of his belief in direct personal communications, for all kinds of purposes, with his Maker. Whatever *happened*, which fell in and accorded with what he *wanted to happen*—as the death of a blasphemer, or of one who could not embrace his tenets—immediately this wild enthusiast relates the fact, and the *means* by which the fact was accomplished. At one place in his travels he was seized by the populace for his obstructive conduct; and, debating whether they should or should not put him in the stocks, they at last let him go. Fox records the circumstance thus: "But the Lord's power was so over them, and so restrained them, that they were not able to put me in the stocks."\* Again, he says: "But the Lord soon after met this envious person and cut him off in his wickedness."† Again: "When we came in they set meat before us: but as I was going to eat the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Eat not the bread of such as have

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\* *Journal*, p. 64.

† *Ibid.*, p. 64.

an evil eye.' Immediately I rose up from the table and ate nothing." \*

One Barbara Blangdon, an early convert to Quakerism, "was moved to call a family to leave off their vanity. Going to the front door of the house where the said family resided, she was sent round to the back door by the servants." "Barbara being come thither, a great mastiff dog was set loose upon her: and he, running fiercely at her, as if to devour her, turned suddenly and went away crying and halting, *whereby she clearly saw the hand of the Lord in it to preserve her from this danger.*"† There is also recorded by Fox, and by Sewel, "what befel Captain Drury for reproaching George Fox with the name of Quaker."‡ As I read the narrative, the Captain must have had what many others have had before him, an attack of ague: being seen in the cold shivering fit, these "Discerners of the Lord's hand in everything," of course said it was a direct punishment for abusing a man who abused everybody else. The before-mentioned Barbara Blangdon also quieted a storm at sea, in crossing the Irish Channel, "which indeed was strange, and made the master say, on arriving in Dublin, that he never was in such a storm without receiving any loss."§ "An Independent pastor, preaching one day against the Quakers and the Light and calling the Light natural, cursed it, and so fell down as dead in his pulpit. The people carrying him out, and pouring strong waters into him, it brought him to life again; but he was mopish, and, as one of his hearers said, he never recovered his senses."||

Sewel mentions likewise the "sudden and remarkable

\* *Journal*, p. 65.

† *Sewel's History of Quakers*, p. 92.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 170, and *Fox's Journal*.

end of W. Watt, an informer at Norwich," upon whom "the hand of God fell so heavy that it put a period to his life," and, "what was looked upon as a very strange thing, the corpse stunk so grievously that none were willing to carry it."\* When any of their own members die, it is always spoken of, by these early writers, as "the pious end," &c., and "the honourable interment," &c., of such and such a Friend. There is a narrative of a most eventful character in which two Friends sailed for the West Indies, and being fearful of the French fleet which was then (1691) on the look-out for the British in every direction; and having thoroughly imbibed the spirit of that Gospel which affirms: "But I say unto you, bless your enemies; and pray for them that despitefully use you," "yet at the same time being strong in faith that it was easy for the Lord to deliver them," when the French fleet *did* come up behaved after the following Christian pattern: "Then James arose from his seat, and took Thomas by the hand, saying 'Now, I hope the Lord will deliver us;'  
*and their exercises were answered, that He who in times past smote his enemies with blindness, would be pleased to do so now—which it was graciously answered, the event convinced them; for the French took all the ships of their (the English) company, except the ship which J. W. and T. D. were in, and two more.*"†

And the Journals of the best of Quakers in modern times are disfigured by narrations of these constantly recurring special providences, though they are not blurted out in so offensive a manner. Mrs. Fry deals largely in them; Joseph John Gurney still more so. The

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\* *Sewel's History of Quakers*, p. 670.

† *History of the Rise and Progress of Quakers in Ireland*, by Thomas Wight and John Ratty, p. 154.

former says that the "Refiner and purifier of silver" *sent her* in one year "a long and distressing indisposition, the death of her brother John, and of her paternal friend Joseph Gurney Bevan, the loss of a most tenderly beloved child, considerable loss of property, separation for a time from her family," *in order to try her faith*.\*

J. J. Gurney says: "When the day came (for giving a Lecture at the Mechanics' institution) I was very poorly, my voice almost entirely gone. . . . When I entered I took my station on the floor, and could not but enjoy the spectacle of more than 1200 mechanics occupying the raised seats of the Amphitheatre to a very considerable elevation. O how merciful was the Lord to his poor servant on that occasion! Many were, I believe, secretly praying for me; and their prayers were answered. After speaking about ten minutes I entirely recovered my voice. This might have been in part owing to the arrangement now alluded to, which constrained me to lift up the head and throw out the chest; but I nevertheless gratefully acknowledge it to have *been a special favour from the hand of my Divine Master*. Clearness of ideas and fluency of speech were also graciously bestowed."†

William Allen's business premises in Plough Court were nearly burnt down by the bursting of a bottle of strong nitrous acid. He says: "When I consider the nature of the accident, our escape seems little short of a miracle. If it had happened in the night there appears no probability that our lives would have been saved. About nine o'clock it was got under, and I trust I may

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\* *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, &c. vol. i., p. 207. London, 1847.

† *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney*, by Joseph B. Braithwaite, vol. i., p. 467. London, 1854.

say *providentially*, though I felt myself unworthy of such a favour.'\*"

Now I should be very sorry for it to be thought that I doubted the excellence of such men as Gurney and Allen. I believe that in the largest sense they are beyond all praise: their exemplary conduct in every relationship of life is not to be questioned. But they inherited probably, and cultivated certainly, a habit of looking out for supernatural interferences on the part of the Deity, in matters where the result obtained and attributed to the special act may invariably be explained by principles and facts with which all of us are perfectly familiar. Minds of their stamp, however educated, and however logical when placed out of the sphere of these *special* influences, are so impressed with the idea that if they do not realize to themselves constant *exercises* of a supernatural *First Cause*, they are placing their sole reliance in *secondary causes*, and insensibly imbibing a material tendency; that they are led step by step into the most extravagant expectations, and, as a necessary consequence, at times into the most grievous disappointment. For if once you admit the special act of interference in a trivial incident of domestic life, or even in a matter of much larger moment—if the same incident should recur, and this time without the same satisfactory accompaniment, one of the weaker brethren naturally concludes that he is under a special and punitive dealing from the Almighty. Yet these unhappy individuals prefer the imperfect accident of interference, to the perfect and defined *harmony of law*. The various forms of religious insanity confirm the truth of these observations. Surely almost every impartial mind will admit that there is no Divine

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\* *Memoirs of William Allen, F.R.S.*, by James Sherman, p. 33. London, 1857.

interference necessary to explain satisfactorily any of the above-narrated incidents. They are of daily occurrence, and are all of them more or less under our own control, as they admit of the most reasonable explanation. There is nothing more common, for instance, than for a strange person who enters a yard where there is a dog, to be barked at and run at by the said dog ; and there is nothing more common than for the animal, immediately he has satisfied the first impulses of his canine nature, to seek his kennel, or begin wagging his tail. There is nothing more common than for one who is hoarse to recover his voice by an act of continuous speaking, which necessitates certain expul-sory efforts for the clearing of the larynx and trachea. The same result would equally follow whether the speaker was about to open his mouth for the worst or the best of purposes. And there is another view to take of such a case as that of our friend's house being burned, which makes this subject more dangerous and complicated than ever, upon the admission of providential interference. For if I admit that God interfered to save the premises in Plough Court, I must admit the correlative that He caused the bursting of the bottle, and the immediate wrapping of the whole place in flames, merely that He might again interfere with an individual exercise of His power.\* Where is

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\* The absurdities into which men may be laid by this doctrine of special providences, were very ably touched upon the other day in the first of our weekly papers, in an article upon Lord Mahon's motion for a petition to the Queen to expunge from the Book of Common Prayer two of our State services. "All admit that every thing is providential—each may and must be a part of one great whole, every event in which is known to God. But then it is as much God's work that Charles I. was beheaded, as that Charles II. was restored. It is objected to Sir A. Alison that he makes Providence a high tory partisan ; but this perhaps is more intelligible than selecting some of God's actions for special praise, because the cor-

the occasion for this sort of interpretation, by an appeal to the supernatural, of circumstances which are clearly within the scope of human agencies?

It will be observed that the "providences," like the habits and minds, of modern Friends, are quiet and refined, as compared with those recorded in the musty volumes of the seventeenth century, where they are made subservient to the vindictive excesses of a miserable fanaticism; though it must be confessed that some of the examples given by Sydney Smith, in his article on *Methodism*, are very appalling and very wicked. Quakers, however, as a class, are much better educated than Methodists.

One is horrified at reading serious accounts of "an Interference respecting swearing—a bee the instrument" (*Evang. Mag.*, p. 363); of "an Interference with respect to David Wright, who was cured of Atheism and scrofula by one sermon of Mr. Coles" (*Evang. Mag.*, p. 444); of "an Interference respecting cards" (*Evang. Mag.*, p. 262) of "the displeasure of Providence at Capt. Scott going to

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relative of this is that some of God's actions are blameable. If the Bishop of Bangor were consistent and logical with his views of providential interposition, he would as often beat his Divinity as offer incense to him. Political Manichæism, like Sir A. Alison's, is quite intelligible. We understand dualism. Heaven is Tory—Satan is a Whig. This was Johnson's view of things human and divine: God fights for England, the Devil fights for France. But if we are told that we are especially bound to be grateful and full of thanksgiving because God saved James I. from gunpowder, we are equally bound to be very angry with Providence for not interfering on behalf of his son. The difference is this—that in the one case we are glad to get God on our side, in the other we only thank God for those of his deeds which we approve of. In either case this view of special providences makes Heaven a political partizan. Besides, where is this to stop? What is the test of especial specialty which is to satisfy all that the *dignus vindice nodus* is attained?"—*Saturday Review*.

preach at Mr. Romaine's Chapel" (*Evang. Mag.*, p. 537); of an "Interference with respect to an innkeeper, who was destroyed for having appointed a cock-fight at the very time the service was appointed at the Methodist Chapel" (*Method. Mag.*, p. 126); &c. &c.

The famous Edinburgh Reviewer sums up well the frightful danger and the demoralizing tendency of this view of providential interference in all the little actions of our lives; for it causes the successful man always to be considered as a good man, and the unhappy man as the object of Divine vengeance; "whereas the honest and the orthodox method is to prepare young people for the world as it actually exists; to tell them that they will often find vice perfectly successful, virtue exposed to a long train of afflictions; that they must bear this patiently, and look to another world for its rectification." This doctrine, too, "has a great tendency to check human exertions, and to prevent the employment of those secondary means of effecting an object which Providence has placed in our power. *The doctrine of the immediate and perpetual interference of Divine Providence is not true.*"\*

It is indeed to be hoped it is not true, for a more frightful doctrine was never eliminated from Scripture. If God really does what some persons say he constantly does, it were better at once to ignore everything but the

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\* *Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith*, p. 95. London, 1854.

Mr. Clarkson quite recognized, in another place, the belief of Quakers in the extreme view of special providences, and says: "I should be sorry to have God considered as a clock, that is to inform us about the times of our ordinary movements; or to make him a prompter in all our worldly concerns; or to oblige Him to take His seat in animal magnetism, or to reside in the midst of marvellous delusions. Why should we expect a revelation in the most trivial concerns in our lives, where our reason will inform us?"—*Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol. iii., p. 246.

wildest chance, and the most chaotic hazard. Indeed such a view of His dealings reduces us to a system of this character, utterly at variance with the general experience of mankind, utterly subversive of all order and arrangement, and utterly destructive of religious Faith, and Hope, and—Charity. I could never love God, as I hope I do; never turn my thoughts towards Him, who came down to us to sympathize and identify Himself with our weaknesses; never wish to have a more intimate relationship with Him, if I appropriated to myself this mockery of a providential scheme. And be it observed, that its rejection does not in any sense interfere with or negative the objects of legitimate prayer—that He who knows all our weaknesses may ever spiritually sustain us, giving us grace to pass safely through all spiritual trials, and strength to stand against all spiritual temptations.\*

“If I am right, Thy grace impart,  
Still in the right to stay;  
If I am wrong, O teach my heart  
To find that better way.”

## *II. The rejection of an organized and paid Ministry; and the recognition of the Immediate Inspiration of male*

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\* It is not to be doubted that we very often do pray for a divine interference with the laws of nature, when it would be more seemly and more religious to leave such matters in His hands who sends His rain alike upon the just and the unjust. “I recollect,” says Mr. Cradock in his *Memoirs* (vol. i., p. 138), “a very worthy rector, possessed of a great living in one of the midland counties, who informed me that on his induction to it he had met with a particular difficulty; for an enclosure had just taken place, and half of his parish petitioned that he would pray for rain, that their quicksets might grow; and the other half that he would intercede for fair weather, as they were in the midst of the hay harvest.”—*Southey's Commonplace Book*, p. 310.

*and female Preachers for the various occasions of Devotional Assembling.*

Like most of the propositions affecting the stability of Quakerism as an Institution of the nineteenth century, the one to be here touched upon is more socio-political than doctrinal. The disjunctive teaching of the letter alike supports and negatives what the Spirit of the Gospel, and the coacting circumstances of our increased knowledge of character, of the differences between the two sexes, and the many helps of advancing civilization, might make sufficiently clear to unfettered understandings.

Quakers are of opinion that there can be no human calling for a divine office, and therefore that it is wrong to set apart persons for special training to the ministry, an initiation into which should be purely by the direct and personal instrumentality of the Spirit.

I have before made allusion to Fox's direct revelation from heaven, that an education at Oxford and Cambridge was not sufficient to constitute a call to God's service.\* Nobody ever said it was. What was said then, and what is repeated now, is, that an University education is a good preparation for a gentleman; and that a gentleman, by reason of his education, is more likely to be instrumental

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\* Barclay seems to have had a peculiar antipathy against the University men of his day—"the young fry of the clergy," as he calls them. He says: "And let it not be forgotten, but let it be inscribed, and abide for a constant remembrance of the thing, that in these brutish and beastly pranks, used to molest us in our spiritual meetings, none have been more busie than the young students of the Universities, who were learning *philosophy and divinity (so called)* and many of them preparing themselves for the *ministry*," &c.—*Apology*, p. 375.

for good in a parish than a low ignorant fanatic. "If God does not stand in need of human learning," said South, "still less does He stand in need of human ignorance." An illiterate man, "dressed in leather," with no knowledge of human nature, no respect for social institutions, no idea that any one could think rightly but himself—going from place to place, now defying everybody who offered him the least opposition with "the terrors of the Lord; or in calmer moments telling his listeners to "sit down in Christ, again, I say, sit down" (*Fox's Journal*), would do now, as two hundred years ago, much more harm than good to the cause of true religion. It is a shame, indeed, ever to have taxed religion with having had any hand in the production of those things which I have previously narrated, as being a part of early Quaker experiences. Religion! She is never anywhere where there are not tolerance and charity. Earnestness is no test of a capacity for real work, nor spiritual commotion, of the power to progress, nor uncontrolled ecstasy, of godlike fellowship and communion. True Religion, indeed, like cheerfulness, is (what Addison calls) "a perpetual sunshine," and (what Solomon calls) "a continual feast." It preaches "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter"—woe, because our moral natures are so constituted that whilst we deprave and pervert them we render them incapable of receiving and appropriating the sublime influences of Christianity. We do not accept as veracious, because we are not furnished with any of that kind of evidence to which as reasonable creatures we are entitled, Fox's bare statements, abounding in every page of his *Journal*, that this man was "convinced," or that that man "received the truth," any more than we believe

his other affirmations—that one was “cut off” because he interrupted the preacher; or that another was “struck by the Lord” because he stood in the way of spiritual progress; or that God “blasted false prophets who rose up against me, and will blast all who rise up against the blessed seed, *and me in that.*”\*

The mass of sin and wickedness in our great towns is not to be grappled with by self-sufficient ignorance, be it animated by never so much zeal; nor is it to be met in the way of preaching by casual “calls to the gallery.”† We must have a regular “organized instrumentality;” we must have a thorough recognition of human means, as those through which alone ends are achieved, and victories won. The most sacred missions require these means, and by the ordering of God’s providence missions are alone successful through them. “God is a good worker,” says the proverb, “but He loves to be helped.” And the help which we can give is by so reading His unvarying dealings

\* *Fox’s Journal*, p. 118.

† This is the expression used by Friends to signify their spiritual call to the work of the ministry. Joseph John Gurney felt the responsibility attached to such a call, and expresses himself concerning it in characteristic phraseology: “I feel a good deal at sitting in the gallery, not being to my own apprehension adequately spiritual.” At another time he records his ministerial success, and that of others: “I was enabled to declare the Gospel with unusual power.” At a period when the preaching of others as well as himself had been “lively and refreshing,” he says: “It was a time of remarkable openness, the Word appearing to run and find entrance.” “There is a remarkable breaking forth of the ministry in these parts.” “It was an inexpressibly exercising meeting.” “I felt the oil flow in a way to which of late I have been much a stranger; and two of our women Friends were remarkable in the exercise of their gifts.”—*From Gurney’s Journal and Letters.*

with us, that we may be prepared for every trial, and bring our hearts and minds into such an harmonious adaptiveness to his moral and spiritual laws, that we may not be presumptuously led to ask for any special intervention on our individual behalf, whilst there is one good and Universal Providence for all mankind.\*

The man, therefore, to do good in a parish, is not necessarily he who has attained the greatest spiritual exaltation, nor who is most familiar with Scriptural concordances, nor who was at the time of his initiation most sensible of a special "ministerial gifting." For every one of experience will acknowledge that there are many men of this stamp, most excellent and well-intentioned, who are unable to recognize the full importance of human instrumentalities; who spend more time in writing sermons, or in reading scriptures which they already know by heart, than in cultivating their own minds by general literature, visiting

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\* Those who have travelled in the East will tell you that neither Christianity nor social progress will be established there until good roads are constructed, that is until the commercial character is developed, by providing an outlet for the internal resources of the various countries which constitute the Orient. All Dr. Livingstone's testimony respecting Africa is to this effect. A Turkish Pasha told a modern traveller: "I am satisfied that Turkey will never advance until she has means of communication sufficient to make her internal resources available. This is the first step towards the regeneration of the Orient—and the *only* first step in the path of true progress." The pickaxe must precede the Bible. But the people rebel at the very suggestion of a road. And so (it should almost seem) Christianity is mapped out geographically, and its limits defined by latitude and longitude. An English engineer now striving to construct a high-road in the island of Crete, has the greatest difficulty in protecting himself and his labourers from the aggressive attacks of the natives. So great is their antipathy against that without which progress is impossible.

the sick, comforting the afflicted, making the poor sensible that in being best educated for this world they are being best educated for the next, bringing together the upper and lower classes, and in combining moral and intellectual with spiritual instruction. The best sermons may be preached in the cottage, where there is no ear to hear them, but the preacher's, the sufferer's, and God's. The noblest discourse may be read to a whole community by the manner in which one bears the grind of poverty, or the bitterness of personal injury. You may learn more (at least I hope so, or Christianity is not good for much) from a quiet unobtrusive scene of this sort, than from the meretricious services of Students of Civil Law at St. John's Wood, or the illiterate jocularity of the Surrey Gardens, or the wailings and lamentations of "Crown Court" at the "Tribulations which are coming upon the Earth," or the nasal monotonies of self-complacent or even God-fearing Quietists. You may inculcate wisdom and charity, on the village green, or in the Mechanics' Institute, or in the lanes and alleys of country and of town. He "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain" may thus be brought within the sphere of human sympathies, and be realized by every Christian heart as the source of all peace and comfort.

The position, then, which we desire to establish is this : it is generally acknowledged that the doctrinal view which Quakers take of the question of "the ministry" is not a correct one, even upon Scriptural grounds; and it is still more generally acknowledged, that, even if their doctrine was clearly supported by Holy Writ, it would be impossible to carry it out, any more than it would be possible to carry out the injunction delivered to the first Apostles, to go out on their divine mission without purse and

without scrip, or any more than we *do* practise the habit of letting the morrow take thought for itself. No one but a madman would think now-a-days of going out to evangelize a London parish without first obtaining every possible kind of material assistance. And the chief mover in the work must be paid for his services like any other labourer who is worthy of hire. To draw any practical inferences from the proceedings of a body of well-to-do Exclusionists who are (I think it is Southey who made the remark) as complete an insulation as if they were set down in the middle of Central Africa, would be absolutely absurd.\* The Quaker ministry has no need to be paid. They are wealthy and influential men in the Society.† They go about from place to place, their travelling expenses being met out of a general fund for that purpose; they are well entertained at the houses of the most important Friends in each town which they visit; and a more agreeable and delightful time than they have it is impossible to conceive.

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\* "There are probably several European nations which are less distinguished from each other, than this Society is from the rest of the English people."—*Table Talk*.

† It should be noted that though according to "ancient principles" the right belongs to any Quaker to address meetings, in a ministerial capacity, who avows himself under the influence of a spiritual call, it was found impossible to permit this practice, by reason of the fanatical abuse of the very doctrine which we have considered under our first heading. The "call to the gallery," is really a setting apart certain members (always leading and influential ones—the Spirit displaying considerable partizanship,) for Scriptural exposition. Any accidental trespassing upon their prerogative by a loquacious but unrecognized individual may be once permitted; but its repetition is jealously resented and forbidden. The "Rules of Discipline" are quoted in answer to the "Inward Testimony."

And they are quite right to do all this if they choose. But this is not that labour in the Lord's vineyard to which a parish priest or a Dissenting minister may have to subject themselves. This only constitutes in a very limited sense what was meant by the "without money and without price." A clergyman of the Established Church, and a Nonconformist minister, have not only to live for, but to live by, their respective Establishments; they have no other means of subsistence, and, unhappily, the breadth of their family circle is usually in the inverse ratio of the length of their purses. But a Quaker minister has no need for money payments, the Bank and the Brewery already abundantly furnishing him therewith. He devotes, and very properly devotes, the great part of his time to these worldly matters; his religious work, as such, in evangelizing a heathen world, is a very small item compared with the work of others. In fact, what he has to do in his ministerial calling is not work; it is unworthy of such a name; it is merely a pleasing outlet for his gentle enthusiasm. He is not fitted for it. He repudiates for the most part the instrumentality of material agencies, recognizing only the unseen workings of the Spirit. But how can the Spirit cleanse Augean stables? We want the right thing in the right place, and then we shall have the right thing done, and the right place occupied. There is a great deal in knowing how and when to strike in; to arrange, to methodize, to adapt,—to put the right attraction under the eye at the proper moment, and so to discriminate between one character and another, as to be ever ready with the special treatment required for each separate individuality. You may see the right thing in the right place every day if you look in the *Times*. Under that mournful obituary where you and I shall figure some day, you may

learn (alas ! if you have not already learned) how to bury your wife or child—how to “cause the marble to assume a living shape, and bend mournfully over their ashes.” You shall gather some information about the scapegrace of a son, who has run away from you ; or *he* may learn that “all shall be forgiven if he will return home immediately to his disconsolate parents,” if you run your eye down the hopeful column which is side by side with the Marriage and the Birth. What tales have been there told ! What despairing hearts have drank in therefrom new life and vigour !

But come with me for awhile, and I will show you yet more clearly the right thing in the right place. I will show you the right way of achieving that, the difficulty of which may seem at first sight to be absolutely insurmountable. It is not very far off—this sight with which I want to familiarize you ; and it is within a few minutes’ walk of the most fashionable part of our modern Babylon.

“It appears by a Report from Mr. Goderich, officer of health in the parish of Kensington, that in a place called the Potteries there are 1,147 human beings, and 1,041 pigs, congregated within a space of less than nine acres, the present number of pigs being below the usual average.”\* Now here is an objective fact which we have got to deal with. It is worse than anything to be found in South Africa, where you sometimes send your money and your sympathy, and young men in white chokers ; or in any other country in the world, because it is in the midst of (what we term) civilization, and in the heart of (what we call) a Christian country. How are we to humanize this place—turn wild beasts into men and women ? How

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\* *Night-side of London*, by J. E. Ritchie. p. 9.

are we to set about improving the soil, ere we sow the good seed which, dropped in at the right time, and in the right manner, may step by step develope itself into cleanliness, into decency, into health, into comfort, into morality, into religious virtue, into Christian love, and finally fructuate into everlasting life? We must begin at the beginning—that's quite certain: no half-measures will do here. Nothing of an exclusive character will do in such a case as this. "Rules of Discipline" we want, truly, but not of the Quaker sort—Rules of Discipline which will reach down to the very depths of this physical and moral depravity. See how differently men will go to work to treat (there is only one way of curing) the same disease. There are some, zealous, earnest, pious, well-intentioned, who will commence with their tracts, and their Scripture readings, and their religious small-talk about coming to church, about the duty of bearing the trials imposed by God, while fever or cholera, generated and sustained by collective circumstances, over which the parish authorities have abundant control, if they like to exercise it, decimate the starved and heathen population. What a land of darkness for a Christian minister to enter! But there is no good to be done this way, because there is no recognition of those subordinate instrumentalities which are required for the achievement of the largest and most comprehensive measures. There are others (and these are the right men in the right place) who will enter upon this mission very differently—who will pull down before they attempt to build up, and who are in every sense alive to the stupendous nature of the task before them. This district, we will say, which is a type of many, becomes a recognized Ecclesiastical district, and is brought under systematic pastoral supervision. It is allotted to an active, energetic,

fearless self-denying labourer—a man of common sense as well as a man of *uncommon* and large-hearted sympathy. He takes off his coat, and turns up his sleeves, and meets his difficulties boldly. His success will depend in some measure upon the character of the wealthy inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood, and of the relationship which he can judiciously bring about between that character and degrading misery. Dives must be introduced to Lazarus. This labourer must sometimes yield to their prejudices about trifles in order to enlist their sympathies, and secure their pecuniary assistance in a matter which is anything but trifling. For instance, he must not put on an ecclesiastical vestment which is associated in the minds of ignorant, or even educated, persons, with a system not regarded in England with peculiar love and affection. It should be manifest to him that a large-hearted man, though a priest, is better than a narrow-minded priest, though a man. He should see that it is of more importance to get these pigs *out* of the parish and the Gospel into it, than that he should wear an alb or a cope in testimony to a rigid principle. He should be “equal to his own epoch.” Is he High-Church, or Low-Church, or Broad-Church? or—what is he? Never mind what name he bears. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” If he be but a man of sound sterling sense, unwilling to do violence to the feelings of others, by trivial dogmatizings, and by demonstrations of a well-understood nature, which serve to arouse party, all will go right. If he has but a practical acquaintance with human nature—can see the correct relations of things to each other as cause and effect—and has a cheerful sympathizing manner—he will not fail of success. He will blot out this foul stain from the parochial district: he will convert this

pandemonium into a decent sheepfold. You will not know the place in two years time. Our friend is liked; he is encouraged; he is helped with pecuniary and other aids. He calls in the Officer of Health and the Surveyor. The wretched inmates of this spot are told that it is proposed to improve their dwellings, and get their children off their hands for the greater part of the day, so that they may have their time more at their own disposal, for earning by manual labour what there is such a struggle everywhere to get—bread. Hark! there is the sound of the hammer and the trowel. There is an exodus of swine. There is a removal of the foul pollutions of *ordures*; a huge sewer is laid down, and efficient drainage is established. The worst of the hovels are pulled down; the better ones are improved; all have a uniform appearance of cleanliness and decency. District visiting is commenced, and the help of woman's earuestness, under the direction of man's soberer judgment, enlisted in the cause of labour and of love. Schools in due time become built, and the children are taught secular as well as religious knowledge—that is, fitted for both worlds instead of only for one. A church is erected. Morality is everywhere inculcated; the religion of Christ is preached—not the doctrine of a "terrible God,"\* but of a loving and compassionate Saviour. Adult schools, too, are founded; education becomes retrospective, and the neglect of past years in childhood is made up to the youth and young

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\* The frequent use of this expression in Fox's *Journal*, shows frightfully the character of his mind and his religion. It occurs too constantly in modern Quaker literature, and leaves the impression on one's thoughts that, according to this strange creed, God takes pleasure in terrifying his creatures.

man. The general mind is interested, apprehends, expands; the upper and middle classes associate with the lower, and the spirit of progress is upon everything. The Sunday is not judaized into a wretched, mournful, uninteresting day, the very thought of whose return depresses the young natures of childhood. But innocent and healthful recreations take part in the improvement of character with cheerful religious instruction. Look at our moral garden now, where grew the briar and the thistles, and where the hogs (quadrupedal and bipedal) did riot. Men have been taught "something of labour but its degradation, something of life but its misery." Where is the drunkard now? We have done something more effectual than George Fox did, when he told an inebriated tinker that he was to cure himself of his beastly habit by "the light spoken of in the 3rd chapter of John." (*Journal*.) We know human nature well enough to be certain that if we withdraw one powerful stimulant we must substitute another of some kind. We have therefore substituted the incentive to learning, and the love of social amusements, for whisky; and the slave to intemperance is trying to make out how it is that the earth spins round like a top, and the sun rises and sets every day. Astronomy versus Alcohol! The profane, the profligate, the scolding mothers, who were wont to frighten their children into obedience and a lie, are changed likewise, and everything has put on the appearance of health and vigour. These children, too, grow up, willing sons and faithful daughters. They marry and are given in marriage. They beget another generation to come after them—a generation which has a better start in life than its predecessor, but which can hardly make a nobler finish. Thus you see a soulless, godless, swinish,



pestilential district has become a spot over which men and angels rejoice; and this all—not by constant individual appeals for spiritual guidance, and for the display of some miraculous intervention; but by a regular and systematic adoption of the appointed means—means which, modified and adapted to various local idiosyncrasies, and to the manners and customs of various countries, will anywhere, in different measure, produce like results. Every sequence should flow directly and naturally from its antecedent—“the grain, the blade, the full ear;” every antecedent should suggest the requirement of the inevitable sequence. This is what may follow from a recognition of human instrumentality, remembering that all human agencies are directly of God’s appointment. They are the links between earth and heaven, forged by God above, let down to us by the light of Natural, and riveted below by the light of Revealed, Religion.

This appreciation of life’s uses and capabilities is what will alone fit us for another service, and a higher state of existence. Can any triumph of this kind be developed out of *Barclay’s Apology*? Is there any Quaker sickle which can cut down such a golden harvest as we have here before us? And will any one affirm that this is not a true picture of what may be witnessed in many parishes? \* I do not say—very far from it—that this

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\* It is extraordinary how very small a proportion the real practical good effected in a parish sometimes bears to the spiritual exaltation of its pastor. Whereas it quite as frequently happens that a man of much less exalted standard, may have such a *tact*, such a knowledge of human nature, such an aptitude for organizations, and for applying remedial agents to moral and spiritual diseases, as to far outstrip his really more evangelical brother. There can be no stronger argument against the Quaker doctrine



sort of work is peculiar to the Church of England, though I think that she has opportunities of doing it which are not equally afforded to any other section of religionists in this country, because she is under the protection of the State, and has larger funds at her disposal. It may be achieved by any sect which, recognizing the institution, and apprehending the wisdom, of that law which equally obtains in the physical, moral, and spiritual world—that certain results flow with undeviating precision from certain antecedents; that we have the power (this power constituting our superiority over the rest of animated nature) of placing ourselves under the influence of these laws, and therefore under the beneficial influence of their results—strives incessantly and labours earnestly, for the meat which does not perish, and the water which flows from perennial streams. Whether these achievements are likely to be effected—whether these results are likely to be brought about, in their more comprehensive entirety, by an organised ministry, is a matter of opinion, the reception of which is regulated by the experience of mankind. We know very well what that experience affirms, and that the Apologist, and those who embrace his views, cannot negative positive results by citing the prophet Jeremiah to the exaltation of a wild and visionary theory. And if

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which we are now discussing. Two of the most perfectly organized parishes I ever heard of—parishes which showed the effect of such organization in every way—were the labour of men largely gifted with the *tact* I have above alluded to, but whose moral conduct was in many senses highly reprehensible. The fact is these too exalted spiritualists are essentially unpractical and unsympathizing. They don't like the dirty work. They "desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," before they have any right to desire it. William Penn, be it observed, wrote a book called "No Cross, no Crown."

he says, "I sent them not nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord," we can appeal to a more modern, and equally good authority, and affirm that "Go teach all nations" is a positive mandate from the Fountain Head to a recognized and appointed ministry.

The very history of the Society of Friends is surely a confirmation of the views here advanced as to the powerlessness of such a system to sustain itself. Compare it with the History of the Church of England, or of the leading Nonconformist bodies, and see if it is not so. What has Quakerism, as such, ever done for the world? Absolutely nothing. The philanthropic achievements of its individual members have been distinct repudiations of their own principles, a recognition of other religious communities, and a fraternization with those out of the pale of their own Eclecticism.

Quakerism has never been anything more than an abstract idealism, aspiring to fructuate in heaven, but refusing to strike its roots into that earthly soil, which is watered from above, and sunned by the many beautiful influences with which God has surrounded us. The legitimate use of these things is our preparatory discipline, and will, through grace and mercy, constitute our passport to the Heavenly Canaan. Quakerism is now scarcely more an objective fact than was Barclay's ill-defined Spiritualism an "objective revelation." And yet Fox wanted to overturn every religion; and Quakers, from his time downwards, have shown by their miserable exclusiveness, in what light they looked upon all religionists who differed from themselves. When I say Quakers I mean the followers of Fox, the upholders of "ancient principles," and of the wretched idea that the

true light only shines upon that exclusive path which leads into dreary and unsympathizing mazes, apart from "the world." It is not necessary to return to "primitiveness" in order to establish the evidence of faith, and earnestness, and zeal. There is nothing primitive now save that starchy and decreasing sect into which has subsided the vehemence of Fox's blustering band. A full-blown Quaker in Piccadilly, and a Bishop in a wig, are about the only anomalies now (and they but very rarely) to be encountered. The time for camel-hair girdles about the loins, and of locusts and wild honey for daily food, is gone by for ever. And surely religious zeal is as great, religious labour as consistent, and in many cases as disinterested (making due allowance for the difference in Society then and now), as it was for years after that voice which heralded the world's Redeemer was heard crying in the wilderness. The "poor fishermen," be it remembered, who "toiled all night and caught nothing," had not so very much to lose when they forsook their nets, and followed their Divine Master; and circumstances did not expose them to the same internal struggle as the young man who "went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions." It is enough, however, that they obeyed the call, and became the channels through which flowed, from the first source, the first streams of revelation and of truth. But the considerations above hinted at are to be borne in mind when we are called upon to estimate the disinterestedness of men; and we may do so without in any sense underrating apostolic excellence, or impugning the sacredness of primitive Christianity. The Apostles, however, *were* men, as they soon proved themselves to be, possessed of about the usual amount of human weaknesses. One denied his Lord; another betrayed him; all forsook him

and fled in the hour of danger ; and one only was distinguished by that beautiful feature of Christian character which lends grace to, and which we dignify with, the name of Love.

Primitive Christianity, we repeat, is not for these times ; but a Christianity educed from it, and adapted to the changing temper of the age, and to the progress effected in all things by civilization. Neither holy fishermen, nor fanatical shoemakers, nor grotesquely clad and devotional Quietists, can now evangelize this heathen world, unless they embrace and utilize all the means, and all the influences, which have multiplied with developing and advancing Time. It is not sufficient to say that efforts to do good are disinterested. They may be all the worse for that, instead of all the better, as far as their practical results are concerned, inasmuch as the disinterested may not have the capacity for appreciating the benefits of their own labours, and the results which accrue from them, in the same measure as the interested. Xaviers are not to be met with in every generation. And the more civilization is extended, and our social system developed, the more is evidenced our mutual dependence upon each other—in other words, our freedom from disinterestedness. More large, more tolerant, more sympathizing with the weaknesses of others, should become every religion based upon that “Volume of Volumes,” which has developed itself from Judaism into Christianity, and proposes the latter only for our acceptance. More catholic should be every creed, more “propitious in its deep inner significance to human progress ; ready to welcome light and truth from whatever quarter approaching ; and in short to ally itself complacently with all that acting beneficially on the character of man, conducing to his best interests, and

cherishing his purest and noblest aspirations, may lead him yet nearer and nearer to the goal of holiness and happiness.”\*

Quakerism, indeed, in one sense, was truly catholic—in the *desire* of its founders that their principles should be universal; though they had a strange way of trying to make them universal. It is catholic also in its reverence for some sacred things; though it is strangely irreverent in respect of other things upon which other sects place the highest symbolical value and importance. But ancient Quakerism was utterly antagonistic to human progress, nor was it wont to welcome light from every quarter; nor was it in any sort associated with man’s highest duties, or noblest performances. And I am sure that the recorded history of the best of early and of modern Quakers does not bear out the assertion that this creed is intimately connected with “happiness.” There is no religious happiness where there is no peace. And there is no peace where a wretched introverting system, which substitutes emotional for practical religion, sets up for us a capricious standard, and tears our feelings to rags and tatters, because we cannot sustain that spiritual exaltation to-day which by fortuitous circumstances (the state of the barometer or the mucous membrane of the stomach) was generated yesterday.

However disinterested, then, Quakers may have been; however much they may have desired to promote the religious welfare of mankind, their principles were antagonistic to their desires, inasmuch as they ignored the providence of human instrumentalities, and closed their eyes to

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\* *The Principles of Ancient Quakerism, with reference to the supposed Decadence of the Society of Friends.* London, 1858, p. 8.

objective facts, which others dreamed not of resisting. Speaking of his favourite geological science, Hugh Miller very properly condemns those who are so "obstinate or so timid as to refuse the acceptance of a physical truth in evidence, because it interferes, or seems to interfere, with the traditionary interpretation of Scripture." And in the same way Quakers are to be condemned, because they are so persistent in putting interpretations upon particular passages of the Bible, which the great majority of Christians repudiate, and which all history, and their own decadence, directly negative. That is a poor religion which necessitates the "clipping of facts (as Mr. Kingsley somewhere expresses it) to shape to doctrines." These arguments are specially applicable to this subject of the ministry. An "organized instrumentality" is essential to religious progress in a huge and mixed community: the evidence of our senses affirms and proves it. Nothing of the kind, says the Society of Friends: yet they are tumbling to pieces under our very eyes, and refuse to accept the evidence of their senses as to the combined causes of their decline.

Of course it is not pretended that circumstances do not frequently obtain, in connexion with the institution of trained individuals for the ministry, which give a powerful handle to those who embrace Quaker doctrines.\* Men, from motives of self-interest peculiar to most of us, put on the (supposed or real, according to individual views) here-

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\* The writer of this Essay once met in a billiard room, at half-past eleven o'clock on a Saturday night, a youth almost in a state of inebriation, who was ordained by the Bishop of——at eleven o'clock on the following morning. This noble aspirant to the Apostolic toga had been twice plucked at Oxford, where he was equally distinguished for the paucity of his brains and the licentiousness of his conduct.

ditary mantle, and go forth to an expectant parish in all the splendour of a full-blown phylactery. But general inferences are not to be drawn from exceptional facts, touching this initiatory process; and it is necessary to bear constantly in mind (what has been previously stated) that the good effected in the cause of religion is sometimes almost in an inverse ratio to the piety of the instrument, just as occasionally—nay, very often, the greatest indiscretions are perpetrated, to the damage of many brethren, by excellent ministers, for lack of that peculiar tact, that generous expansiveness, that perception of the requirements of their own epoch, which are so essential to harmonious working, and thereby to constant progression. It has been so in the varied fields of science and the arts; it has been so in the philosophy of moral teachings; it has been so in every profession; and it is so in the Lord's spiritual vineyard. I have seen great big Christian Masters of Arts, men once of enlarged capacity and refined tastes, so narrowed and straitened by perseverance in a lean and fruitless servicial exaction, as to lose all sense of the varied duties and responsibilities of the social system. I have seen them pulling day by day their own sheep-bell, because no one could be found to do it for them, to bring out the housemaid from her domestic duties, and a rheumatic old woman from her comfortable cottage, to constitute a congregation—"the two or three gathered together in my name." The empty formality, the terrific pace, the frigid character of the entire proceeding, have startled me into wonderment as to that deteriorated condition into which men may be reduced by a superstitious thralldom, and a misapprehension as to the proper usage of our time and capabilities. Why, so strange is this infatuation about religion con-

sisting in nothing but a monotonous round of "daily services," that there are earnest and excellent men now in London and elsewhere, carrying out this system, of which they fail to see the unadaptiveness to the moral and spiritual wants of the community, and the utter futility of which they attribute to their own want of perseverance and zeal, rather than to the violation of ordinary and obvious principles. They have no sympathy with their kind; they have no sympathy indeed with anything but the wretched formality which they strive to set up, and bid men fall down and worship. Without a large and general sympathy it is impossible to construct a Christian character, or to humanize a Godless people. To these men, the use which others make of these tame supplicatory forms is the standard by which they gauge spirituality. A more degrading and unexpansive system it is impossible to conceive than one which excludes sympathy, because it is a non-recognition of that variety of character, and therefore that variety of treatment, which constitutes and is needed for society. "It has produced numbers of people walking up and down one narrow plank of self-restraint, pondering over their own merits and demerits, keeping out, not the world exactly, but their fellow-creatures from their hearts, and caring only to drive their neighbours before them on this plank of theirs, or to push them headlong."\* What! have we been surrounded by so many natural beauties, have we been gifted with so many natural impulses towards the high and beautiful, for no reason but that we may despise them in order to fetter ourselves with a purely ecclesiastical thralldom? Can our natural bodies thrive upon one food? Can our

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\* *Friends in Council.*

intellectual natures expand upon one idea? Can our moral and spiritual natures progress by monastic seclusion from the countless floodings of God's light and glory? "Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And in how many ways does not He speak to us, and with what varied impulses has He not endowed us? And are not the material and the immaterial parts of our individualities so constituted, that their action is reciprocal, and their dependence mutual? If we neglect the one a sensible result is imparted to the other.\* Just as there are certain vegetables which, without having any actual nutritive properties, are capable of yielding elementary principles which refresh and invigorate our material natures, so there are

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\* "The experiments upon which men have ventured with religion resemble those which the curiosity of the chemist has led him to try with light. The sunshine, or white light, is best adapted for vegetable growth. But what, asks the man of science, if we subject plants to the influence of only one of the prismatic colours of which the solar ray is composed—to the red, for instance, the yellow, or the blue? Plants have been reared, accordingly, under glasses of these several colours. Experiment shows that the yellow, whilst yielding the largest amount of light, prevents, as might be expected, the germination of seed; the red produces the most heat, but the plant is unhealthy; beneath the blue the strongest chemical effect is realized, but under this influence the strength of the plant fails to keep pace with its growth. *It is thus that men have separated in religion those influences which ought to be combined.* One class of religionists will admit only light for the intellect, another only warmth for the heart. Under the influence of the first the good seeds must remain dead; subject to the glowing rays of the second growth is artificial and diseased. A third class, again, are less concerned either about the light or the heat, about religion as a mere idea, or religion as a mere sentiment, than they are about the security of that merely chemical result—an established orthodoxy."—*Robert Alfred Vaughan.*

many influences which largely affect for good the moral and spiritual parts of us, and bring about that harmonious action, which is the type of all God's dealings with His creatures. Hence the great advantage of mixing in society and in the world: hence the benefit of studying all natural phenomena; hence the advantage of travelling in many lands, and viewing nature under every variety of aspect. Who so large-hearted, who so sympathizing, who so tolerant of the opinions of others, as he who has travelled and observed? Is it not given to him to ascend higher, and to feel nobler impulses, than the wretched slave who gallops thrice a day through a monotonous lip-service, and averages three old women and a boy for his congregation? O that some of the Rubrical worshippers of "Holy Mother Church," would but expand their natures, and obstruct not their highest impulses by persevering in a fruitless formality, to which the cold irresponsible apathy of the people shows its miserable unadaptiveness!

And with respect to the *Ministration of Women*. This question, be it remarked at the outset, does not turn upon whether the doctrine has or has not the sanction of St. Paul. It is not a religious, but a social question of the 19th century, on which St. Paul is no more an authority to be appealed to than on a question affecting any of the physical sciences. St. Paul did not know (how should he?) that the earth went round the sun, any more than he knew that British Legislators 1800 years after his day would object to the admission of Jews, though they should be never so indifferent about Infidels, to Parliament, for fear of endangering the Christian character of the country. But it is quite certain that he recognized for the weaker sex the primary importance of domestic duties, and social

obligations (which have wonderfully multiplied since his time), when he said: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, *give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.*" Nor was he insensible of the tendency of a morbid system to make women "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Our lessons as to what is best upon a social subject of this character, are to be gathered from our knowledge of human nature in general, and female nature in particular. It is a plain practical question. Do you or I know *any* woman, however excellent, however spiritually gifted, who would be likely to benefit a Christian community by publicly officiating in church or chapel? Would her moral or spiritual condition, would her sense of female modesty (which no woman can afford to trifle with) be injured or improved by such a course? Would she advance the cause of virtue and religion, by usurping to herself an office for which it is almost certain she has an intuitive perception of unfitness, which she endeavours to stifle, by a forced interpretation of the letter of Scripture? And it must be remembered here, that one of the great beauties of the Christian scheme, and of the sublime narrative which records it, is that it *does* adapt itself to all our wants, our sympathies, our weaknesses, and presents to us doctrines which *are* in accordance with the perceptions of our moral nature.

It suggests itself to 4999 men out of every 5000 that, from the comparatively emotional character of women, it is neither prudent, nor right, nor necessary, to expose them to an ordeal from which almost every well-regulated female would shrink with horror. And it is no profanity

to state that if St. Paul had known as much of the nature of the weaker sex as we know in the present day, when he wrote his Epistles, he would have mapped out in language of the clearest and most intelligible kind,—that is in language which *no one* could doubt—woman's subordinate ministerial position. Unfortunately, as regards both sexes, the admission of the doctrine of an immediate spiritual call to oral communication, necessitates the inevitable result, through our manifold weaknesses, of such communication bearing an exact ratio to the intensity of our emotion, and the morbid character of our piety.

Joseph John Gurney frequently lamented, as one of the chief causes of deterioration in the Society of which he was so consistent a member, that women's ministrings had of late years greatly exceeded those of their (implied) lords and masters. Mrs. Fry had doubts about the propriety of pastoral obtrusiveness in her sex. "I see many difficulties attached to it (my calling a meeting in London), and perhaps none so much as my great fear of women coming too forward in these things, beyond what the Scripture dictates."\* Comparatively inferior men, as we have before pointed out, may often have a special aptitude for organizing means which are always more or less instrumental, under providential arrangements which are legibly recorded, in bringing about moral and spiritual improvement. Quakers deny this; but facts affirm it positively. Knowledge of Scripture is a useless weapon, wherewith to combat the huge wickedness of our social system, if it be not sharpened by a thorough knowledge of human nature, and an aptitude for discerning at a glance the idiosyncrasies of individual man. It will be granted, I suppose, that women have less discernment of character than men, that

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\* *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. ii., p. 140.

they have less judgment, and less experience of life's hardships and difficulties. "God," said Luther, "in the beginning made but only one human creature, which was a wise council: afterwards He created also a woman; then came the mischief." Admitting the truth, without endorsing the satire, of this observation, one cannot but reflect how frequently a want of tact, and a little petty way of treating even a small matter, *do* produce an incalculable amount of evil. The revelations of the domestic life of the Society of Friends do not constitute exceptional testimony to that which is evidenced by other social and religious bodies. Woman *is* the weaker vessel, say what you will: and she is never so weak as when she is out of her proper place, and striving therein to display her strength.

Women, moreover, from constitutional infirmities peculiar to the sex, from the certainty of periodical interruptions to habitual service, and from various other combinations, are absolutely powerless for the efficient work of the ministry. How can they regulate others, when in matters of *feeling* (and religion and feeling are synonymous terms with the most pious Quakers) they cannot regulate themselves? And what a source it is to gather your religion from—what a fountain from which to draw living waters—an ill-regulated and highly sensitive mind, constantly absorbed in the "circle of profitless spiritual delights and conflicts!"

There is nothing more clearly marks the fanatical character of the great religious (so called) movement of the 17th century, than the number of emotional enthusiastic women who felt themselves "called" to forsake their legitimate and useful occupations, to flock round an unmanageable and illiterate leader. Young uneducated girls, at a time when the mind is peculiarly susceptible to

religious impressions, and prone, upon the slightest undue stimulus, to give those impressions an exaggerated and unhealthy character, were then, as now, peculiarly obnoxious to the influence of an extravagant and "frothy pietism." The mischief done to these poor unhappy creatures by the monstrous evils of a certain form of (what is called—God forgive me for so perverting the word) "evangelical" preaching, is beyond the cognizance of those who have no experience of the life of lunatics. I swear I have seen in one Asylum, at one time, maddened by one popular preacher, whose name will suggest itself at once without my mentioning it—three young girls, believing themselves to be "in the blackness of darkness for ever." Their look of utter and unredeemed despair is beyond all power of verbal expression. The lies that are uttered from our pulpits every Sunday, by earnest and well-meaning ignorance, throughout the length and breadth of this land, are beyond all calculation or conception. It would be well if they who do these things would but remember what was said by a great preacher—one of Nature's High Priests, endowed with the most comprehensive power of thought and observation—"In the treatment of nervous (which is generally only another name for moral) diseases, he is the best Physician who is the most ingenious inspirer of hope." I would rather believe Coleridge than these Biblical exponents, who, whatever "faith" they may have, certainly have neither "hope," nor "charity."

We cannot do better than illustrate the unhealthiness and unprofitableness of religious excitement by a reference to the career of a woman of whom the Society of Friends may well be proud. Let us see what was the habitual state of her mind; and recollect that she was not only one of the first among Female Ministers, but one of the noblest women that ever lived. We think of her, and are

chiefly familiar with her, in connexion with Newgate, and her noble philanthropic mission to that pestilential den. But I shall take you for a few minutes to that tell-tale of the inmost heart—the *Journal*, and show you what shreds and tatters were her convulsed feelings ; what self-inflicted agonies she subjected herself to, and what a chaos was the spiritual part of her nature. So, alas ! may it happen that there is no “light in dark places,” even to the “godly.”

And I must embrace this opportunity of stating, that so thoroughly morbid do I consider the *Journal* and *Letters* of Mrs. Fry, as a whole, in spite of many nobly redeeming passages, that I should deem myself guilty of administering moral poison of a most dangerous character, to any young persons, by putting before them the documents alluded to. It is grievous to be compelled to say this of such a large-hearted philanthropist as she was—of one whose memory will go down to posterity in the “fragrance of blessings.” Nor do I except from this condemnation the records of her excellent brother, whose *Journal* and *Letters* reveal a far more frightful state of mental disquietude than those of Mrs. Fry. I should imagine that no autobiography has ever been given to the world, containing more painful disclosures of distress of mind (an educated and religious mind), than the one which has been most conscientiously edited by Mr. Braithwaite.\* And I protest, that if I had a child old enough to understand it, I would not put this Memoir into his hands, for all I hold dear. I would not let him see what harsh and forbidding features the Gospel may assume, under misdirection and perversion. I would

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\* *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney, &c. &c.* Edited by J. B. Braithwaite. 2 vols. 8vo., 1854.

I shall take occasion, in a subsequent part of this Essay, to support my opinions, by reference to the above work, and by a brief sketch of Gurney's life.

not let him know of the "terrors of the Lord," or of God's "great awfulness;" but I would lead him rather to woo Religion through ways which are ways of pleasantness, and paths which are paths of peace. And yet, such is the anomalous character of high-class Quaker piety, that I am compelled to make these remarks of a man whose individual excellence is above praise, and whose desire to act with singleness of purpose, and with an eye only to God's glory, was never surpassed.

Let it be observed that Mrs. Fry begins that pernicious system of *journalising her feelings*, before she is sixteen years of age. Before she is seventeen she writes: "My mind is in a state of fermentation. I believe I am going to be religious, or some such thing." Again: "I am a bubble without reason, without beauty of mind or person. I am a fool." At another time: "My imagination has been worked upon; and I fear all that I have felt will go off." These extracts from the very commencement of her career show clearly the unhealthfulness of the system into which she was initiated, and the false ideas which ultimately maddened her into misery. The notion which prevailed in her mind in respect of entering the ministry was not highly salutary, and was surely rather struggling against the "Spirit:"—"Being a minister is an awful practice, from which my whole nature recoils." The following extracts show the strange alternations of religious passion, occasional glimpses of serenity and peace, and an almost maniacal despair: "A sweet inward covering over the meeting." "It was a very melting interview." "Yesterday was to me an awfully affecting day." "I feel at times deeply pressed down on account of my beloved children. *Their volatile minds try me.*" "Much pressed down in spirit for many days past." "In this low state even the grasshopper becomes a burden

to me." "Nervous lowness of spirit, and much mental fear." "My heart feels very full; my body, I, believe has trembled ever since I rose to meet the party now assembled." "My spirit was much overwhelmed within me." "Oh! how do I see rocks on every hand." "*In the night I had a deep plunge, making me exceedingly low and nervous.*" "In a portion of prostration, and deep abasement of spirit." "The enemy appeared to come in like a flood." "Much stripping and deep poverty has at times been my portion." "I felt *a little ray of comfort* this morning in these words—'My King and my God.'" "My soul has travailed much in the deeps." "A heavy eloud passed over me." "My spirit is brought deeply prostrate within me." "I seldom remember being less able to come at divine consolation. *The Bible is a sealed book to me.*"\* "I have had *some awful plungings and deep wadings* about it (the marriage of her daughter), though no doubt it is a providential opening for her." "Yesterday at Meeting the Truth rose into much dominion." "I have had fresh cause to raise my Ebenezer." "On Fourth-day I passed through deep and great exercise of mind, and weakness of body." "Fearful nervous mind." "*The awful and buffeted state of my mind.*" "Oh, for a quiet spirit!" "I abhor myself in dust and ashes." "*I think for a time I partook of perfect peace.*" "Flat in spirits." "I am at times brought into deep conflict of spirit before the Lord." "*I am in mercy favoured with a trustful hopeful spirit.*" "Exquisitely anxious." "*There are times when the tide of life is almost overpowering.*" Towards the close of

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\* "What a dreadful feeling," writes Mrs. Opie, in her Journal, "for any one to feel themselves spiritually deserted and unable to pray! But then the case is one of physical as well as moral disease." —*Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, p. 303. Norwich, 1854.

this chequered career things become worse instead of better —“humiliations and conflicts” are perpetual. “Wonderful rejoicings ;” “lowness ;” “*cast down but not destroyed.*”\*

Can it be wondered at that we desire to escape from such a religion as this, and turn to something more heaven-born and comforting? Is it possible to present a more frightful picture than the one now delineated? What a tornado of religious passion! What ceaseless surgings of troubled waters! What records of a spasmodic despair, here and there within the legitimate bounds of insanity! “True religion,” it has been beautifully said, “is never spasmodic: it is calm as the existence of God. I know of nothing more shocking than these attempts to substitute rockets and blue-lights for Heaven’s eternal sunshine.”† And there is nothing singular or exceptional in this good lady’s Journal, to distinguish it from other Journals of Friends. Its revelation is a necessary sequence of the antecedents, if attempted to be forced to the highest pitch. I do not mean to say that Mrs. Fry was not by nature “highly nervous.” Indeed I shall endeavour to point out presently, under our more material section, that both her brother and herself were largely within the influence of somatic causes of depression, though I wish to guard against the misuse of the term “nervous.” But a happier religion would have beneficially influenced their physical natures, and imparted that serene cheerfulness which triumphs over the material and the immaterial.

And (to return to our more immediate point) what a fountain is a mind of the above stamp from which to draw living waters! What a channel through which

\* *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1847.

† *Bayard Taylor*.

to receive spiritual monitions!\* How little faith and confidence would—how little faith and confidence *ought* any healthful mind to place in the oral or written teachings of one so tormented in mind and soul as this miserable lady! This is neither the light burden nor the easy yoke to which the Saviour invited the weary and heavy-laden. Nor is it that peace which passeth all understanding. The sad record, indeed, bears out fully the truth of what Sydney Smith said—that “The luxury of false religion is to be unhappy.” “God is not a jealous, childish, merciless tyrant. He is best served by a regular tenor of good actions—not by bad singing, ill-composed prayers, and eternal apprehensions.”

It is the opinion of Quakers that he who “has a concern” to minister by preaching, is not called upon in any way to consider, with a view of “getting up,” a particular doctrine, or analyzing a special subject. It is enough to wait for the motion of the Spirit, who shall put words into the preacher’s mouth. Now one would have thought that in the case of any “fearful nervous mind,” subject to “buffetings” and “plunges” such as harassed poor Mrs. Fry, there might reasonably be some modification of the above tenet. For it must be obvious to any one who reflects upon the subject, that many excellent and pious individuals, gifted with most comprehensive views upon religious matters, might be deterred by nervousness, or

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\* Mrs. Fry was reputed to be very “powerful” at times in her ministrations of prayer and preaching; and strong healthy men, who might creditably have displayed less weakness, frequently wept under her “sweetness.” William Allen records: “E. J. F. read to the prisoners; there was a solemn silence afterwards. She then knelt down in supplication, and proceeded with such clearness, sweetness, depth, and power that *my tears* flowed freely.”—*Memoir of William Allen, F.R.S.*, by James Sherman, p. 290. London, 1857.

other causes, from delivering extemporaneously, what they could easily commit to paper, and then read aloud with calmness and deliberation. The act of writing down holy thoughts, suggested by direct spiritual visitation, cannot take away their efficacy, or deprive them of their truthful element. If they are good to-day they are good to-morrow : if they are immediate revelations to the individual heart, they are not the less revelations because they are transferred to paper, and because they are not directly communicated to others. If there was really any kind of novelty in religious thoughts, or spiritual suggestions, it would be another matter altogether. But take any leading doctrine of Christianity, and there can be nothing fresh or original in your manner of dealing with it. But one man may have a happy mode of expression, either hereditary or acquired, which enables him to impart his views, with salutary effect, to other minds, quite irrespective of spiritual influences, or novel suggestions.\*

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\* I was very much struck, one "First-day evening" last summer, by a circumstance which brought forcibly before me the disproportion sometimes existing between earnest zeal and the practical good which it is capable of effecting. In the neighbourhood of Hanwell was being constructed a branch railroad to Brentford, and certain worthy individuals had advertised that they would preach every Sunday, for the benefit of the poor "navvies" engaged on these works. On the evening in question, a Dissenting Minister from Hanwell was officiating. The burden of his sermon was : "O, waste not time ! Time is very precious. O, waste not Time. And Eternity is a very awful thing. O, waste not Time !" There were occasional allusions to the blessedness of heaven, and *the dreadful torments of hell*. But no idea was given to these men of the social advantages of religion ; no practical hint was given them as to *how* they were to proceed in their difficult path ; no practical suggestions were made as to the manner of improving themselves. And that not being done, it did not seem to me to be very wise or very proper to talk to these poor creatures about the tortures of per-

It had surely been very profitable to Quakers, and indeed to all religionists, had we accustomed ourselves to deal with Scriptural truths more in the practical common-sense way which we adopt with other matters.

The question of the supposed inspiration by the Spirit, to one who preaches, of words exactly adapted to the particular occasion of their utterance, bears precisely upon this point. For instance : an exemplary Minister of the Gospel, be he “a hireling” or not, says : ‘My experience of what are termed direct spiritual influences, as the result of “silent waiting” upon God, affirms that I can do more good to myself and to others, by repudiating this doctrine, and adopting means of an essentially different character, for effecting religious progress. I find that my intellectual faculties are keener and more apprehensive for the first three hours after breakfast : I devote that time therefore to a very important duty—that of composing a sermon upon some subject or other. What subject shall I take this week ? There have been many sudden deaths in my parish lately. It is an opportunity for pressing home to the living the importance of prayer and watchfulness, and of considering how soon they may be numbered with the dead. I can express my thoughts in writing with clearness and precision, in the retirement of my own study ; and I have not found that God is not often there present with me. I cannot express them with anything like

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dition. It is impossible to speak too highly of the unselfish devotion of this minister, who had thus gratuitously added to his own heavy official labours, the task of preaching in a broiling sun to Great Western “navvies.” But such efforts must be thoroughly fruitless, because they do not *teach* anything. How much could not Mr. Maurice, or Mr. Kingsley, or Mr. Binney, do with men of this stamp ! They would not be content with telling them to “Come to Jesus ;” but they would tell them *how* to come to Him.

clearness or precision if I wait till next Sunday, and trust to the Spirit's sustaining power; and I know from my acquaintance with human nature, that I cannot be so acceptable to my congregation, when I inflict upon them a jumble of loose unconnected words, which I could scarcely recall five minutes after their delivery. I am not a Spirit, preaching to angels; but a man full of weaknesses and infirmities, preaching to men and women, who reside in fleshly tenements, and are clothed in the garments of mortality. I shall continue, therefore, to write my sermons; and if, as I trust in God, what I do write is of his teaching, it will keep very well till next Sunday, and go home with force and power to the hearts of many hearers. This, I maintain, is a common-sense view of this socio-religious question, which Quakers have entirely failed to apprehend. I ask any one to test the truth of these views by experience. Let him go into a Friends' Meeting-house and hear one of their ministers, and then let him go and hear some such preachers as the Bishop of Oxford, Mr. Hampden Gurney, Mr. Evans (of Wells Street), or Mr. Binney. He will be astounded at the monotonous inanities of the former, and the large comprehensiveness of the latter, and at the comparative effect produced upon his own heart by their respective teachings.

The doctrine, I repeat, which repudiates an organized instrumentality for ministerial purposes, relying solely upon the accidental breathings of the Holy Spirit upon lay members of a community, can never be maintained or supported, as long as it can be made clear to demonstration, that religious results often bear no kind of proportion to the religious earnestness and spiritual exaltation which have mediately produced them; and that the earnestness is frequently greater in women than in men, by reason of their tendency to emotional excitement. A man who has no

earnestness about him, and whose life is comparatively but a very indifferent one, may have a happy way of putting things before others which may almost ensure their eager, and often their profitable, reception. This facility of imparting his knowledge and his opinions may be extended to all subjects upon which he touches, and may be used equally for good and bad purposes.

The grand error of nearly all religious sects lies in the fact, that certain members thereof undertake that for which they are manifestly unfitted by nature, under the idea that their physical or mental capacities will be amended by grace. And so we have ministers who think to teach all things, and have not yet learned, and never will learn, to teach themselves; and whose inefficiencies are recognized and forgiven because, forsooth, "they mean well." What if a Doctor or a Lawyer respectively commit themselves, by their ignorance of their profession, to the damage of a patient's health, or a client's cause? Who thinks of overlooking *their* failing, upon the plea that they "mean well"? Why there is an action for damages, and if there is no successful verdict for the plaintiff there will at least be a moral lecture for the defendant from Lord Campbell. "That a large class of men (says Mr. Kingsley) should believe that they have the power of saving human beings from endless torture by use of their tongues, and then not only employ for that purpose the dull talk which is to be heard in average pulpits, but also deliver the same with a voice and manner which set a whole congregation asleep, and which would destroy the custom of a barrister, an auctioneer, and even a penny-picman—this does seem to me one of the most astounding facts of an enlightened age."\*

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\* *Alton Locke.*

### III. *The unsatisfying and unsubstantial character of the Society's form of worship.*

This proposition is intimately connected with the preceding one. The same Spirit which prompts to preaching prompts also to prayer, immediately and personally, quite irrespective (according to Quaker theory) of time, place, or any adventitious circumstances.\* It prompts also to "silent worship," a form of communication with the Deity which is not adapted to the requirements of most natures, and which is, therefore, rejected for other and more satisfying means.

"Silent worship," as practised (or rather theorised) by the Society of Friends, is utterly unsuited to a healthy moral and religious condition, and serves only to minister to the requirements of something essentially morbid in our natures. It is a species of mental introversion which leads either to spiritual self-sufficiency; or it is a sort of crucial self-anatomy which distorts the object of adoration, paralyses the soul, and clogs her heavenward aspirations. As a system, constituting an article of Faith, it is a distinct repudiation of the more legitimate channels of Grace—an attempt of the most daring kind to step into an *immediate* Presence, for which we can alone prepare ourselves by *mediate* instrumentality. The dazzling vision of "Him that sitteth on the throne" is thus made to flood in too fully upon mortal eyes; and, without some

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\* "We further intreat you, that in all your religious meetings appointed for the worship of Almighty God you wait in humble reverence for the influence of the Word of Life. Be cautious not to move in acts of devotion in your own will: set not forward self to work, but patiently attend and wait for the gift and enlivening power of the Divine Spirit; without which your performances will be unacceptable, and like those of old, of which it was said, 'Who hath required this at your hand?'"—1742. *Rules of Discipline*, p. 159.

shaded interception, it blinds even that humility which yet kneeleth on the "footstool."

Some early Quaker author, speaking of "silent worship," observes: "In stillness there is fulness, in fulness there is nothingness, and in nothingness are all things."—(*Jaffray's Diary*, p. 271.) These words are said to have been uttered at the first Quakers' meeting ever attended by Robert Barclay, and to have made the impression upon him which eventuated in the *Apology*. They contain three distinct propositions, neither of which are clear to unbrimmed apprehension.

One Michael de Molinos, who was chief of the sect of the Quietists, and whose *Spiritual Guide* was printed at Venice in 1685, speaks thus: "There are three kinds of silence; the first is of words, the second of desires, and the third of thoughts. The first is perfect; the second is more perfect; and the third is most perfect. In the first, that is of words, virtue is acquired. In the second, namely of desires, quietness is attained. In the third, of thoughts, internal recollection is gained. By not speaking, not desiring, not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect mystical silence, where God speaks with the soul, communicates Himself to it, and in the abyss of its own depth teaches it the most perfect and exalted wisdom."\* Does this three-sorted Quietism receive attestation from the Italian proverb—"He who speaks, sows; he who keeps silence, reaps"? And has Carlyle endorsed it when he says "Speech is silbern; silence is gold"? No: far other is that comprehensive silence—for it "desires" and "thinks," desire and thought being the elements of its comprehensiveness—alluded to in our

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\* Quoted by Clarkson in his *Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol. ii., p. 293.

sententious epigrams. Whereas, the interpretation of the passage from the *Spiritual Guide* is this: the lower you can reduce a man in the intellectual scale; the more inanimate and unsympathising you can render him; the nearer you can bring him to a state of complete *amentia*—the more intimate becomes his communion, and therefore the more sure his acceptance, with God. This is what Quakers call “the sublimest part of worship.”

Barclay endeavours to point out the advantages of “silent worship” in his usual verbose manner; and he speaks of its great power to control and subdue wandering minds—which is just the very thing it has no power to achieve. He says: “Yea, if it fall out, that several met together be straying in their minds, though outwardly silent, and so wandering from the measure of Grace in themselves (which through the working of the enemy and negligence of some may fall out), if either one come in, or may be in, who is watchful, and in whom the Life is raised in a great measure; as that one keeps his seat he will feel a secret travail for the rest, in a sympathy with the *seed*, which is oppressed in the other, and kept from arising by their thoughts and wanderings.” And he adds: “the rest will find themselves secretly smitten, without words; and that one will be as a midwife, through the secret travail of his soul, to bring forth the life in them; just as a little water thrown into a pump brings up the rest; whereby Life will come to be raised in all, and the vain imaginations brought down, and such a one is felt by the rest to minister life unto them without words.”\* It is not more strange to consider how any man whom God endowed with capacity should have penned such unmeaning verbiage as the above quotation, than it is difficult to realize the fact that men have received

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\* *Barclay's Apology*, prop. xi., p. 356.

this nonsense as Spiritual Truth. And if you enquire how they know it is Spiritual Truth, the answer, of course, is "the Spirit affirms it to be so."\*

Joseph John Gurney strongly insists upon the necessity of silent worship, and says that the frame of mind induced by it, and which suggests it, is, in some measure, *at all times*, inherent in the true Christian. And, after quoting Habbakuk and Zechariah (for whom, together with Jeremiah, he has a peculiar veneration upon all manner of subjects), he enquires: "What then can be more desirable for us when thus assembled than literally to comply with the inspired precept, and, in *awful reverence of soul, to keep silence* before the Lord?"†

Now, I am prepared to maintain that, as a special act of worship (if worship be a proper name to give it) nothing can be more unprofitable, or more liable to perversion, even with minds of a superior culture, especially when associated with an emotional tendency, than this advocated silence. And I believe that there is greater knowledge of the human mind, and of its requirements, displayed in the following brief sentence from a modern Author, than in all that Barclay ever wrote, or Joseph John Gurney penned: "Every thought, to be really healthy, must *culminate in*

\* One of the great advantages mentioned by Barclay, of this *Silent Worship*, "doth appear in that it is impossible for the enemy, viz. the Devil, to counterfeit it, so as for any one to be deceived or deluded by him in the exercise thereof." *Apology*, p. 370.

The many remarks of this character to be found in Barclay, show how little real knowledge he had of the human mind. All mental philosophers, and all healthy religionists, are agreed that there is nothing more pernicious or deceptive than a continuous system of mental introversion—of silent, centric, self-communion.

† *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends*, by J. J. Gurney, p. 303. London, 1834.

*an act of some kind or other.*"\* "Very good that." It is a sentence which should be blazoned on the door-posts of every introverting Religionist, every sentimental Quietist. "One good *action*," said John Henry Newman, "is worth a thousand fine *thoughts*." These ideas are eternal verities, be they applied to religious worship or to anything else. If the impulse is to worship God, the greater embodiment we can give to that act, and the more practical we can make its tendency—the more real and substantial does it become. Hence the advantage of alms-giving and every form of objective Charity. We may in thousands of little ways testify to His service who freely gave us all things, by small duties,† which in themselves constitute acts of worship, and make us feel how truly Dr. Arnold spoke, when he said that "great thoughts *underlying and animating small duties* is the true idea of practical Christianity."

Coleridge had some such thought as this when he put the following words into the mouth of the *Ancient Mariner*:—

"He prayeth best who loveth best, all things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us, He made and loveth all."

And to love Him is to be engaged in His active service ("He that loveth me keepeth my commandments")—to be ever doing something which may minister to *our* progress and to His glory. "These are my mother, brethren, sister, who do the will of my Father which is in Heaven."‡

\* Dr. Henry Monro.

† "J' ai toujours attaché une importance extrême à ce qu'on appelle vulgairement les petites choses ; des attentions délicates, quand elles sont persistantes, prouvent la constante occupation de la pensée."  
—*Mrs. Opie*.

‡ It may be interesting and instructive here to record J. J. Gurney's definition of *practical* religion. It is the key note of all that

The general experience of mankind tends to prove that it is *not* an easy thing to worship God in a manner which yields spiritual satisfaction to the petitioner ; and that the more we endeavour to strip ourselves of mediate assistance,

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follows in his eventful career. "9th mo. 12th, 1834.—What is *practical* religion ? Is it not the work of God's Spirit upon the soul of man, bringing it to a spiritual knowledge of the Saviour, and redeeming it from all sin ?" This definition is one of the many instances presented in Gurney's Life, of a substitution of *feelings* for *facts*. He perpetually confounds the two, and frequently says in his letters and journal that religion is a matter of feeling, whereas practical religion—"pure and undefiled before God"—is a matter of *facts* : a "visiting the fatherless and afflicted," &c. (*Memoir of J. J. G.*, &c).

Mrs. Fry's definition may be placed beside that of her brother. In 1808 she writes to a young Friend : "True religion seems a subject of that great importance, *that we must not play with it, either mentally, or in word* ; perhaps thou wilt think it odd, but at seasons *I am not a friend to too manly religious thoughts* ; for thoughts are apt to wander and border on imagination. *Religion is a deep inward working of the feelings and of the heart* : we must not look too much for bright light on the surface of things ; but we must humbly and quietly try to *seek deep*," &c. (*Memoir of E. Fry*, vol. i., p. 89.) Compare these definitions with Dr. Arnold's almost epigrammatic one previously mentioned.

George Fox himself has left a better definition of true religion than even his disciples of these later times. The following must have been penned in one of his serene moments : "True Religion is the true Rule, and right way of serving God. And religion is a pure stream of righteousness, flowing from the image of God, and is the life and power of God planted in the heart and mind by the law of life, which bringeth the soul, mind, body, and spirit, to be conformable to God, &c. This religion is from above, pure and undefiled before God ; leads to visit the fatherless, widows," &c.

This is a verbose and elaborate definition. Might not as much, and even more, be expressed in fewer words, by saying that True Religion is the discernment and the doing of God's will ?

which is of God's own appointment, the more danger do we incur of rendering Him very little service, and of making ourselves very miserable. This is the explanation of that mental distress, and terrible anguish of soul, which characterize the *Journals* (be the lives never so excellent) of so many high-class pietists. Life to them is one long attempt to insulate themselves from human dependences and material agents, whereas these are the very instrumentalities which God has appointed for His dealings with us, the very channels through which he vouchsafes to pour down upon us the most abundant measure of His grace. We are fitted for no higher service yet; we are not prepared, save at very rare intervals, for a closer communion. The continuous effort to realize God in another way than by the education of all the Christian virtues, which make up the perfection of the social life; and by practical efforts to subdue all our evil tendencies, is certain to produce misery, because it involves the closing up of those avenues to His presence through which He is only to be reached. It involves, too, a constant comparison of ourselves, who are imperfect, with a Being who is perfection itself—a constant dissection (so to speak) of feelings, which reveal Him to us as “very far off,”—whereas He may really be brought “very near” to all men, by a diligent use of His own appointments.

“Every ambitious attempt,” says Isaac Taylor, “to break through the humbling conditions on which man may hold communion with God must, then, fail of success; since the Supreme has fixed the scene of worship and converse, not in the skies, but on earth. The scripture models of devotion, far from encouraging vague and inarticulate contemplations, consist of such utterances of desire, or hope, or love, as seem to suppose the existence

of correlative feelings, and indeed of every human sympathy, in Him to whom they are addressed.”\*

And the same author says again, in his usual vigorous language: “There are anatomists of piety who destroy all the freshness and vigour of faith and hope and charity, by immuring themselves, night and day, in the infected atmosphere of their own bosoms. But now let a man of warm heart, who is happily surrounded with the dear objects of the social affections, try the effect of a parallel practice; let him institute anxious scrutinies of his feelings towards those whom hitherto he has believed himself to regard with unfeigned love; let him in these enquiries have recourse to all the fine distinctions of a casuist, and use all the profound analyses of a metaphysician, and spend hours daily in pulling asunder every complex emotion of tenderness that has given grace to the domestic life; and, moreover, let him journalize these examinations, and note particularly, and with the scrupulosity of an accomptant, how much of the mass of his kindly sentiments he has ascertained to consist of genuine love, and how much was selfishness in disguise; and let him from time to time solemnly resolve to be in future more disinterested and less hypocritical in his affection towards his family. What, at the end of a year, would be the result of such a process? What but a wretched debility and dejection of the heart, and a strangeness and a sadness of the manners, and a suspension of the native expressions and ready offices of zealous affection? Meanwhile the hesitations, and the musings, and the upbraidings of an introverted sensibility absorb the thoughts. Is it then reasonable to presume that similar practices in

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\* *History of Enthusiasm.* 10th edit., p. 26.

religion can have a tendency to promote the healthful vigour of piety?" \*

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the rejection of ritual observances in the worship of Almighty God is not peculiar to the Society of Friends, though scarcely any Nonconformist body strips Religion so cruelly naked, and exposes her in such an unprotected manner to the world, as the descendants of George Fox. Personally I must confess to a love for some sort of accessories in devotional services. Indeed I can scarcely be devout without them; for they seem to me, if properly directed, to appeal to everything lofty and beautiful in our natures. And these accessories are undoubtedly furnished by all that is grand and beautiful in the natural world. I do not say that there are not those who can do without such assistance; but I do say that such persons are not to be envied. They may worship God as well in a barn or in a balloon as in the "dim cathedral aisle." Be it so. Such cases are certainly exceptional, and I do not think they obtain, as a general rule, where there has been much mental culture, or moral and intellectual refinement. And the feelings which lead to a barren worship do not accord with the sublimest notions which we are led to form of the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, nor with the ideas which we entertain of that state of being which will constitute the reality of His beatific presence, in the world beyond the grave.

It is wonderful, indeed, and consoling likewise, to con-

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\* *Natural History of Enthusiasm*. 10th edition, pp. 32, 3.

This passage expressed accurately the hurtful results of that system which though not confined to, more largely characterises, the religion of Quakers than the religion of any other denomination.

sider how largely we are sometimes influenced for good, in the mere reading of Scripture, in prayer, in contemplation, by the accessories of objective facts or subjective associations; and what an advantage minds susceptible of such impressions have over the barren believers in the nudity of an insular worship! None of these helps are to be despised with impunity; they are themselves revelations of God, and we may be sure that a full recognition of their value is the truest acknowledgment of our own weakness, and of our belief in the marvellous fusion of Divine with human sympathy. Who that has ever lost father, wife, or child, cannot realise more fully than he who has experienced no social disruptions the language of the bereaved Psalmist, when he says:—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"? The actual association of death, with one individual, constitutes an accessory fact which places before him David's outpouring more fully than before another. It is the same feeling which affects us in respect of a particular building, or a particular town, or a particular name. A chord of wonderful sympathy is made to vibrate, and to subdue our moral or spiritual natures into a condition more meet for the reception of the Divine afflatus, than they otherwise could have been. Is there anything wrong or superstitious in this? Do not our natures, wonderfully varied as they are, respond affirmatively, and almost universally, to this magic influence of association? And is that man to be commended or envied who, for the sake of what he calls a *principle*, and because it has been written that God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," could go into Westminster Abbey with his hat on, and say that it was no better than any other building? Psha! If it has not been consecrated by priestly offices, it has been consecrated by the veneration of ages, by the scenes inter-

woven with our history which have been there enacted, and by the mighty dead who lie buried within its walls. Need a man be any the worse for yielding to such influences as these? Does the "spirit" answer 'yes?' Then the spirit does not always bear witness to the truth. And are we to believe that there is any one who could now stand in the Pincio Gardens, at Rome, and gaze upon

"The Niobe of nations, where she stands  
Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe,"

and not think of her marvellous history, and her present shame? Is there any one who could wander over the plains of Jordan, or enter Gethsemane's garden, or climb the rugged path along which toiled the "Great Sufferer," and not be pierced with the memory of his affliction? Should not any decently instructed mind, without even a claim to refinement, find itself, by reason of an association which may be instrumental to religious impressions, more interested in the Imperial City, and its wondrous story; more deeply sensible of the Saviour's agony, the tears, the crucifixion, the bitter cry, than he had ever been before? The man who, worshipping independently and silently, denies such influences as our natures are susceptible of, through agencies of the above character, is *not* a man, for he repudiates humanities; he is not a spirit, for he ignores the humbling conditions of spiritual elevation. And so, dangling between the material and the immaterial, and satisfied as to neither, he makes himself perpetually miserable in this world; and he will assuredly find some sort of disappointment at the energizing and active joys of the world to come.

There are few things more interesting than to trace the effect—the involuntary effect—produced upon some edu-

eated and highly cultivated natures, which had imbibed the notion that there was an unpardonable weakness in yielding to these soul-stirring influences. My observation leads me to remark that our Transatlantic brethren have a peculiar pride in resisting the claims of ancient, and particularly of classic, memories. The ablest of modern American travellers has, to his credit, recorded, in his most recent work, how completely he was overpowered by "conventional sentiment" (as he expresses it), which he felt certain he had the power of counteracting. We are upon the shores of classic Greece, we are in the dead capital of that once favoured land, and in sight of its marvellous Acropolis. We are under the Doric pillars of the Propylæa, and mounting the steps where Pericles walked. "And not only Pericles, but the curled Alcibiades, the serene Plato, the unshaken Socrates, the divine Phidias, Sophocles and Æschylus, Herodotus and Themistocles, and—but why mention names, when the full sunshine of that immortal era streams upon our pathway? And what is it to me (breaks in the half-subdued indifferentist) that they have walked where I now walk? Let me not be wheedled out of my comfortable indifference by the rhythmic ringing of such names. The traveller comes here, expecting to be impressed by the associations of the spot, and by a strong effort he succeeds in impressing himself. Repeat the same names for him elsewhere, and he will produce the same effect. But for me, I am hardened against conventional sentiment. I have seen too much to be easily moved; I can resist the magic of ancient memories, no matter how classic. What is it to me that Pericles walked up those steps; that the gilded robes of Aspasia swept the Pentelican marbles; that Phidias saw the limbs of a god in the air, or Sophocles chanted a chorus as he walked? They

were men, and I am a man too, probably in many respects as good as they. Had I lived in their time, I should, no doubt have looked upon them without the least awe, have slapped them on the back, and invited them to dinner. Now, why should their ghosts shake me with weak emotion, and rob me of my cool judgment? No! I shall be indifferent. So meditating, I walked up the steps." But it would not do. Gradually steals over the matter-of-fact traveller the magic of overpowering memories. What with the wondrous ruins, "the olive groves of the Academy," "the pass of Daphne, and the blue hills of Salamis," and the inhalation of the "perfect harmony" of the entire picture, he reveals to us the subjugation of his entire nature. After a beautiful description of the whole scene, he says:—"Once having looked upon the Parthenon, it was impossible to look elsewhere, and I drew nearer and nearer, finding a narrow lane through the chaos of fragments piled almost as high as my head, until I stood below the Western front. I looked up at the Doric shafts, colossal as befitted the shrine of a goddess, yet tender and graceful as flower-stems, upholding without effort the massive entablature, and the shattered pediment, in one corner of which two torsos remain of all the children of Phidias, and—to my confusion I must confess it—all my fine resolves were forgotten; I was seized with an overpowering mixture of that purest and loftiest admiration, which is almost the same thing as love, and of unmitigated grief and indignation. Well—consider me a fool if you like—but, had I been alone, I should have cast myself prone upon the marble pavement, and exhausted in some hysterical way the violence of this unexpected passion." "These blocks of sunny marble (our author eloquently continues) were piled upon each other, to the chorus of the

same song which the seasons sing in their ordered round, and the planets in their balanced orbits. The cheerful gods are dethroned ; the rhythmic pulsations of the jubilant religion which inspired this immortal work have died away, and earth will never see another Parthenon." " I will not say a word against the solemnities of Gothic art, which Mr. Ruskin declares to be the only religious form of architecture ; but, I ask, is there no joy, no cheerfulness, no comfort, no hopeful inspiration in our religion ? If there is, God has no better temple on earth than the Parthenon. Atheistic ? prove it, and you glorify Atheism. You may take models of the Parthenon at home, you may take drawings and photographs, and build up any super-transcendental theory out of such materials. Then come here, stand in the midst of its ruin, listen to the august voice which yet speaks from the sunburnt marbles, and unless you be one of those narrow souls who would botanize on his mother's grave, you will fall down upon your knees and repent of your sins."\*

And this leads me to observe, that any form of religion which refuses to recognize as an essential part of its institution the cultivation of all the social virtues—which withdraws from the innocent pleasures and recreations which Nature suggests to us, and for the enjoyment of which Nature's God has fitted us—must have some strange misapprehension as to that future state of existence whither we are all hastening. For surely it is more wise and more refining to believe, with respect to a subject about which nothing certain has been revealed to us, that the future life will be, as it were, a growing out from, and a development of, the present one. All analogy seems to

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\* *Travels in Greece and Russia*, by Bayard Taylor. London and New York. 1859, pp. 37-41.

favour such a belief, and the moral perceptions of the natural man seem, for the most part, to point to such a beautiful and harmonious theory. According to this view, we shall carry with us into the untried land all our highest and noblest faculties, and they will there become perfected to us by the sunshine of God's eternal presence, and constitute that heavenly fruition which commenced on earth, and led us, step by step, above and beyond the stars. Thus he who had the largest appreciation of the manifold beauties of this life, and who recognized the discipline of its various duties and pleasures, which were alone capable of cultivation by free mixing with mankind; he who weaved the thread of life into a many-coloured and glorious fabric; who by the education of every virtue, and the realization of every spiritual influence, has most assimilated himself to the Divine Pattern, will be best prepared for those higher enjoyments and those loftier regions to which they lead. Any other theory than this negatives the only legitimate construction which can be put upon the affirmation, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and fails to secure us from, what is contrary to all God's dealing with us in the material world—the absolute waste and annihilation of our noblest qualities. "The mind of man, formed as it is to be more tenacious of its active habits than even of its moral dispositions, is, in the present state, trained to the exercise of skill, of forethought, of courage, of patience; and ought it not to be inferred, unless positive evidence contradicts the supposition, that this system of education bears some relation of fitness to the state for which it is an initiation? Shall not the very same qualities which here are so sedulously fashioned and finished, be actually needed and used in that future world of perfection? Surely the idea is inadmissible that an instrument wrought up at so

much expense to a polished fitness for service, is destined to be suspended for ever on the palace-walls of heaven, as a glittering bauble, no more to make proof of its temper !”\*

And if these things be true, and this theory of a future life has a fair degree of probability, what an advantage have those who mix freely with the world, and are yet unspotted by it, over any class of Exclusionists, who shrink away, like thorough cowards, from life's duties and responsibilities : on what vantage ground will they stand as compared with grotesquely-clad Quietists, or filthy Monachists ! † Neither the primmest Christians in creation, nor (as Monks have well been called) “the nastiest beasts on the face of the earth,” ‡ can be so well prepared for the next world, other things being equal, as those who have recognized in the joyous beauties of this life a foretaste of the heavenly Canaan. For has not the whole career of these “pensioners on futurity” been one systematic abuse of a thing which the more it is studied the more lovely and

\* *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 139.

† “The virtue which the world wants is a healthful virtue, not a valetudinarian virtue ; a virtue which can expose itself to the risks inseparable from all spirited exertion, not a virtue which keeps out of the common air for fear of infection, and eschews the common food as too stimulating.”—*Lord Macaulay*.

‡ If any proof is required of the degradation to which a fanatic may reduce himself, under the conviction that acts of this kind are required by the Gospel, and are calculated to raise the spiritual element of our threefold natures, the following amply furnishes it : To such a height did “the blessed Joseph of Corleone” carry his bestiality that he “not only never washed either himself or his tunic, but during the whole of his Capuchin life nourished all sorts of the most filthy parasites upon his person, gathering up with paternal solicitude those which fell from him, and replacing them amidst their fellows.”—*Gavazzi's Recollections of the Last Four Popes*. London, 1858, p. 232.

wonderful does it appear to us? And what guarantee have we that any man who has voluntarily incapacitated himself for enjoyment on earth, can have any appreciation of, or any aptitude for, enjoyment in heaven?

IV. *An absolute physical, mental, and moral deterioration, arising from the combined effects of frequent intermarriages, morbid "seriousness," and a too emotional and introverting Religion.*

We are not generally aware what an intimate connexion there is between physical, moral, and spiritual health.\* This mutual and threefold dependence constitutes a fact as true, if not as incomprehensible, as a doctrinal Trinity. Yet no one can be fully sensible of it who embraces the belief with which Quakers have harassed themselves with respect to Spiritual Visitation, although he may be suffering from every species of morbid religious depression. Hence the misery of a creed which is based upon an ignorance of ourselves and God. The more, indeed, we do know of ourselves, the more we know of Him; and that knowledge is attained, not by a feeble and introverting system which repudiates the beneficial accessories of the external world; but by a large and expansive one, which gathers in light from all the varying influences which surround and embrace us. How distressing is it to see a cultivated and earnest Christian unable to realize that serenity which he seeks for, because of certain physical causes which he might (or might not) control, or certain specialties incidental to his position in life. But how much more distressing to see an inability to trace the effect to legiti-

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\* "I firmly believe that I have more than once changed the moral character of a boy, by leeches to the inside of the nose."—*The Duality of the Mind*, by Dr. Wigan, p. 16.

mate antecedents, and to find left to the sufferer the miserable alternative of attributing his disquietude to the withdrawal of the Comforter, and the isolation of his own unaided resources !

Such (it cannot be too often repeated) is the reciprocity of action existing between the material and immaterial parts of our nature, that a want of that beautiful balance which constitutes (what we may term) integrity of health, or symmetry of character, may, if not attributed to the proper cause, and immediately rectified by the proper means, develope itself into the convulsion of our triple and compound being. The moment there is a want of adjustment in one of the parts, the other parts may respond thereto, and the latter may immediately react upon the primary element of disturbance.

Thus there has come to be established, to an extent fully known to psychologists, a very intimate relationship between an emotional type of religion and an emotional type of physical disease. Hysteria, and certain forms of excito-motory weakness, may bear a direct ratio to morbid apprehensions of Divine wrath, or the "frothy" visions of depraving ecstasy.

The material feature of religious dependence has been most ably and characteristically handled by a modern Non-conformist Divine in the following passage: "As the great peculiarity of our present condition of existence is, that we live in a body; and as the fitness and adaptation of that body to the purposes of life depend on its soundness and vigour—in one word on good physical HEALTH,—I begin with this.\* In some very few extraordinary cases, it has happened, that persons of feeble or diseased bodily structure have been able to accomplish great things. In

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\* The author is endeavouring to prove (and he does prove very satisfactorily), how a *perfect* system of religious virtue can only be built up on a thoroughly healthy compound of body, mind, and soul.

general, however, good health is essential to the successful pursuit of the business of living. I have a great idea of vigour and elasticity of limb and muscle; strength for action or endurance; brain and heart, lungs and liver, all in such thorough condition that a man never for a moment thinks about them!—does not *know* he has a stomach,—is unconscious of languor, headache, dyspepsia,—and is thus fitted not only for protracted and cheerful physical labour, but more likely to have force of will, large general capacity, a natural inclination towards sound masculine thought, and an innate superiority to indolence, luxury, and debilitating indulgences. It is a miserable thing when life is only one long disease, or when some conscious poverty of power, some natural feebleness, or some latent morbid tendency, compels a man to be always thinking about himself; forbids the formation of plans, and restrains from efforts and enterprises, which might otherwise be successfully indulged or attempted. Good health is not only important to a man's making the best of life, but may be regarded as included in that best itself. All the parts of the physical structure being sound and good, fitted for their work, and constantly acting in harmony with each other, not only makes the body an efficient and nimble servitor for the soul, but is productive of that buoyant and pleasurable consciousness which attends health, and which of itself makes a man feel it a privilege to live.”\*

I believe as thoroughly and entirely that the highest form of religious virtue can only be attained by one who

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\* *Is it Possible to Make the Best of Both Worlds?* By Thomas Binney. 10th edit., pp. 30, 31. London, 1856.

I take this opportunity of recommending the above little work (price 1s. 6d.) to all young men, as an admirable guide from the

is practically conscious of the fact, that his nature is a triple compound of matter, mind, and soul ; as I believe that a life-long victory transcends (what some persons are so very fond of talking and writing about) “a death-bed triumph.” And they who do write and talk thus should remember, that by reason of the various physiological forms in which death comes to us, the opportunity of displaying this triumph is granted but to few, even of the noblest Christians. But the daily life—*that* is granted to all ; and that is a larger and better field for operations than the narrow room and the curtained bed. *There* we read the lesson of what Christianity does, or does not, do for us. The uncomplaining spirit, the meek endurance, the “smile of suffering,” the habitual cheerfulness, the sustained charity—*they* are the triumph and the victory : for they are the abundant harvest of the real Christian’s Faith. It is for us to enquire whether Quakers have not, as individuals, been so absorbed with the one idea of the soul, and its direct personal communication with the Spirit, as to overlook the proper cultivation of the intellect, the useful and required training of the body ; and to neglect, in their corporate capacity, the duties which they owe to society and themselves.

First of all, is it not a well known fact that the Society of Friends have not the appearance or the character of healthfulness ?\* It is true, indeed that, owing to

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beginning to the end of life. It contains more common sense, more intellectual vigour, more healthful morality, more real religion, than all the Quaker literature in the world.

\* I must guard myself against being misunderstood here. The *mortality* of the Society of Friends is less than that of the community at large. But I believe the standard of perfect physical health to be nothing like so high ; and this in spite of all the advantage of regular habits, and abstinence from excess.

their temperate habits, they are not obnoxious to many of those diseases by which others afflict themselves; and so they enjoy an immunity from one form of mortality, though, it would seem, they are peculiarly exposed to another. It is stated, in a *Memoir of Lord Jeffrey*, that "most Quakers die of stupidity—actually and literally." "I was assured the other day of the fact, by a very intelligent physician, who practised among them for twenty years; and who informs me that few of the richer sort live to be fifty, but die of a sort of atrophy, their cold blood just stagnating by degrees among their fat. The affection is known in this part of the country (Liverpool) by the name of *Quakers' Disease*, and more than one-half of them go out so."\* My own personal experience would certainly lead me to coincide in the general opinion, that Quakers have not the appearance of robust physical health, but rather that of inanition. Yet there is abundant evidence to prove that they are not indifferent to the pleasures of the table, nor to the manifold good things of this life, though, as a body, they are unquestionably abstemious.† The good and excellent Joseph John Gurney died prematurely, and he outlived two wives who appear

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\* Taken from Mrs. Greer's *The Society of Friends*.

† Mrs. Fry had very sensible views upon the subject of indifference to material comforts. She says: "The luxuries of life and generous living that I have had, I accept as gifts from a gracious and merciful Providence, that have been greatly blessed to my help, and, I believe, have greatly promoted my recovery. I exceedingly regret what I consider the intemperate and unchristian views some take of these things, judging all who feel it right to take stimulants in moderation. I believe Christians may use and not abuse these outward blessings, and that we have the highest authority for doing so; as He who set us a perfect example, and exactly knows our wants, temporal and spiritual, certainly took wine."—*Memoirs of Life, &c.*, vol. ii., p. 416.

to have dropped away—one of them did certainly—quite unexpectedly. It appears to me that Gurney's life was shortened by his abstinence from fermented liquors, which were excluded altogether from his residence, during the last two years of his existence. He unquestionably died of inanition. His father died prematurely likewise.

The causes, then, of the general unhealthy appearance of Quakers not being excesses of a sensual character, to what are we to attribute this striking feature in the career of those individuals who constitute the Society of Friends? Frequent intermarriages, imperfect education, a morbid seriousness—in other words, *a want of cheerfulness*,\* a refusal to participate in manly sports, and a too emotional piety, are of themselves sufficient to produce physical, mental, and moral deterioration, in any community.

The exclusiveness of Quakers in “disowning” those who marry out of the Society, has very much circumscribed the choice of strict members who have uxorial tendencies; and has led to frequent intermarriages. That such unions carried to any great extent produce great physical deterioration, is a well-acknowledged fact; and physical deterioration may speedily eventuate in insanity, and in numberless forms of disease depending upon imperfect nutrition.†

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\* “Strange as it may seem (writes Archdeacon Hare) there have been such incarnate paradoxes as would rather see their fellow-creatures cry than smile.”

† “Consanguineous marriage, as a remote somatic cause of insanity, stands in the same relation to the disease as the poisonous atmosphere of deep valleys, or that of ill-drained or ill-ventilated cities.”—*Dr. C. M. Burnett on the Somatic Causes of Diseases of the Brain, in Journal of Mental Science*, vol. iv., p. 86.

The Armenians, as a race, are now dying out of Bengal, from constant intermarriages, which perpetuate and augment the result, in physical deterioration.

Let us look at the subject of insanity—see how it may be produced by the combined action of the above-mentioned causes, and what amount of that frightfully increasing malady prevails in the Society of Friends. There appears to be some difficulty in obtaining strict statistical accuracy upon this point, arising chiefly from a confusion of the questions of *liability to*, and *prevalence of*, insanity, the number of *existing* cases in different communities being, in truth, no test of the *obnoxiousness* of such communities to the disorder. The experience, however, of Dr. Thurnam, in his valuable *Statistics* is, that there is a larger proportion of cases of partial and slight mental disturbance, admitted into the York Retreat (a famous Quaker Asylum for Lunatics of that persuasion), than is at all common to other institutions for the reception of the insane. He thinks due allowance should at the same time be made for the fact, that in a small community, like that of the Society of Friends, the number of ascertained cases would be greater than in the community at large.\*

An alienist physician who flourished at the beginning of the present century thought that “the decorous piety, and exemplary life, of the Quaker has signally exempted him from the most severe of human infirmities.”† A more modern writer (Dr. Burrows) thinks that there is a larger proportion of Insanity in the Society of Friends than out of the pale of that community; and he assigns frequent intermarriages and consequent physical deterioration, as the probable causes. Dr. Thurnam finally sums up the matter in these words: “The proportion of existing cases of Insanity in this community, cannot thus be less

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\* *Statistics of Insanity*, by John Thurnam, M.D., pp. 175, 176.

† Dr. Haslam. *Observations on Insanity*, p. 265. London, 1809. (quoted by Dr. Thurnam.)

than 52.5 to 10,000, or as 1 in 190 of its population. Though, as we have seen, not at all determining the degree of liability to Insanity in the Society, this is a proportion of existing cases which at first sight appears high, and is no doubt attributable to the slighter cases brought under care, to the long average duration of residence, in those who are discharged recovered or otherwise, and especially to the low rate of mortality at the Retreat, though this latter is in part met by the lower mortality of the Society of Friends as a body." \* So that, in point of fact, it may be stated, that statistical data are not as yet sufficiently defined to enable us to determine with accuracy whether the liability to Insanity is greater in the Society of Friends than in the community at large. At the same time it must be borne in mind, that the most fertile of the physical causes of Insanity, in general asylums, is intemperance; whereas in Quaker Asylums the number of cases produced by this means is very small indeed. So that to a *general physical deterioration* may probably be ascribed a larger proportion of Insanity in than out of the Society of Friends. This circumstance is well worthy of note, for it proves the point for which I am contending. It is further supported by the fact, that the number of cases of congenital weakness of mind is considerably larger within the Quaker pale than out of it; and the hereditary predisposition is more evident likewise. The subject itself is replete with interest, in its social and general bearings; and "I feel concerned to add" two circumstances in connexion with Quaker insanity, which bear out what I have previously hinted at with respect to hysteria and emotionalism: 1st, "The larger number of cases which originate in the earlier period of life, or from

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\* *Statistics of Insanity*, p. 177.

20 to 30 years of age ; and 2nd, *the unusually large proportion which occurs in unmarried persons.*" I believe there is a great deal lying under the surface of these apparently trifling facts : but it is obvious that here the subject assumes too special a character to make its further elucidation desirable.

I am anxious, however, to suggest another view of the question of Insanity. It has been my wish to indicate throughout this Essay, that Quakers, like other sections of Christianity, may be divisible into classes. The Society of Friends contains two distinct and separate parties. The one party I term self-complacent Quietists ; the other party I name high-class nervous pietists. The former, it is needless to observe, have nothing attractive about them, and they have been the means of driving the present generation from the Quaker fold in very large numbers. They take things much too easily (believing that their exclusiveness is their real safety and constitutes their superiority over others), to go mad about religion or anything else. And the physical deterioration of the species evident in them, shows itself in intellectual feebleness rather than in extravagant emotions. Joseph John Gurney had a righteous horror of this section of his own community, when he wrote to his son : " Shun self-complacency as thou wouldst a serpent ;" and his *Journal* and *Letters* abound with passages expressive of his conviction of the danger of this infirmity to any religious body. Nor was Mrs. Fry insensible to similar dangers when she wrote : " I want to see more real cultivation of mind, and more enlargement of heart towards all."\*

But I believe that if any analysis could be made of the latter section, which bears about the same proportion to

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\* *Memoir of Life*, vol. ii., p. 110.

the former as good men bear to bad in all communities, it would be found that a very large per-centage of cases of Insanity would be yielded by these high-class religionists. For the disease here noted, is of the same emotional character as that which obtains in the religiously insane, in general Asylums ; and arises from perverted views of human life, and human responsibilities, and from an entire misapprehension of the nature of God's providential dealings with His creatures. And this shows us how careful we should be as to the expressions which we make use of with respect to those unhappy subjects of mental disease, now so frequently to be met with. It will be admitted that nothing is more common than the notion that Insanity is a *special visitation of God*. We constantly hear persons speak of it in this manner. But such a view is obviously a direct impediment to curative measures, and a direct encouragement to religious persons of a certain temperament to entertain groundless fears of punitive dealings from the Almighty. This point may, I think, be well illustrated by the following consideration. Dr. Cumming has recently published a Book entitled *The Great Tribulation : or the Things coming on the Earth*, in which he ventures (to adopt the phraseology of an able critic) "with a degree of self-assurance which is only paralleled by his enormous ignorance and audacity," to wind up things terrestrial with the key of final consummation, at the end of seven years. Now this is an old amusement of Dr. Cumming—perverting the ancient prophecies to his own narrow and limited views of the material world : and I am not saying more than I know to be true when I state that there are Lunatic Asylums whose inmates could attest the gentle and benignant influences of his strange theology. And it may be predicted, with unerring certainty, that as the septenary period above indicated draws toward its

close, the number of weak minds brought within the sphere of Crown Court Divinity will evidence, by a most frightful form of religious Insanity, the dangers of fanatical interpretation, by men who have obtained a reputation for capacity to decipher the hidden mysteries of the Bible. Are we to call this a "Visitation of God?" Or is it a "Visitation of Dr. Cumming," whose baneful influence it is not a part of the Divine and Providential scheme to modify? Alas! we must take the evil with the good. And the most we dare say, is that in every age there are false prophets, both in Science and Theology, who are permitted to transmit even to a distant posterity the prejudicial influences of their ignorance and presumption.

Moreover, are those who adopt this incorrect phraseology, by which God is made to do that which man achieves for himself, aware of the fact—the very startling fact—that emotional Insanity bears an exact ratio to religious enthusiasm, which is only another name for an ill-regulated desire for religious excellence? "At an early period of his observation—before the spread of infidel principles in France—Pinel calculated that about one-fourth of the cases of Insanity, with the causes of which he was acquainted, were due to excessive religious enthusiasm; while, at a later period, Esquirol found that in upwards of 600 lunatics in the Salpêtrière, this was the cause in only eight cases; and in 337 admitted into his private asylum, this was supposed to be the cause in only one instance." \* Does not this show us how we may pervert the spiritual

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\* *Psychological Medicine*, by Drs. Bucknill and Tuke, p. 169. London, 1858. It is no answer to this fact to say that Religion *properly applied* never produces insanity. Its danger lies in its liability to misapplication. And what is misapplication to one is not so to another. I should go mad (for instance) upon Mr. Spurgeon's theology: and I dare say he would go mad upon mine.

system—do violence to the law of grace—even where we are actuated by the highest motives; just as we infringe the social system, or the laws of our material nature, being influenced by the lowest motives—those of immediate personal enjoyment—and that both causes shall be followed by retributive results, of a well-determined and unvarying character? This is the *law* of God's dealings with us, and constitutes at once (because we can decipher it) our protection and our discipline.

It has always appeared to me that few things are more appalling, than to see men so solicitous to serve God as to lose the power of correctly apprehending His goodness, and, therefore, of effectually serving Him at all. And yet that this is the character of the great majority of cases of emotional Insanity there can be no doubt whatever. A perpetual fear of the Almighty Wrath obscures the beautiful features of Almighty Love. And this is the case equally with the ignorant and with the educated, especially if the latter are the subjects of physical nervousness and debility. The Chaplain at Hanwell in his last Report, says: "In my intercourse with the patients it is very painful to find, how very erroneous are the views they entertain of the character of God; and this error not unfrequently is the ground of fear and despondency. God the Father is regarded as an angry Being, who needs to have His wrath appeased by the Son. Of the love of God the Father, that true love which led Him to give His only begotten Son for a lost world, there seems often an utter forgetfulness or ignorance. There can, therefore, be no just appreciation of God's readiness to receive back all who truly turn to Him."\*

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\* It requires no professional mind to apprehend the truth of the following remarks by a very able Physician (Dr. Combe): "If the best Christian be he who in meekness, humility, and sincerity

I have already made allusion to Mrs. Fry's career, to her Journal and letters, as constituting a most extraordinary compound of material and moral weakness, with lofty spiritual excellence, producing the result of such terrible distress of mind, as at times to be within the limits of insanity. The records of her brother, Joseph John Gurney, reveal, if possible, a worse state of things. I think I shall be able to give a better idea of that religious condition which I am peculiarly solicitous to warn others against, and which I think has had much to

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places his trust in God, and seeks to fulfil all His commandments ; then he who exhausts his soul in devotion and in prayer, and at the same time finds no leisure or no inclination for attending to the active duties of his station, and who so far from arriving at happiness and peace of mind here, becomes every day the further estranged from them, and finds himself at last involved in disease and despair, cannot be held as a follower of Christ, but must rather be regarded as the follower of a phantom assuming the aspect of religion. Where insanity attacks the latter it is obviously not religion that is its cause ; it is only the abuse of certain feelings, the regulated activity of which is necessary to the right exercise of religion ; and against which abuse a sense of true religion would, in fact, have been the most powerful protection. And the great benefit to be derived from knowing this is, that whenever we shall meet with such a blind or misdirected excess of our best feelings, in a constitutionally nervous or hereditarily disposed subject, instead of encouraging its exuberance, as at present we often do, by yielding it our respect and admiration, and even attempting to imitate its intensity ; we shall use every effort to temper the excess, to inculcate sounder views, and to point out the inseparable connexion which the Creator has established between the true dictates of religion, and the practical duties of life, which it is part of His purpose in sending us here to fulfil ; a conviction, it may not be superfluous to add, which it is impossible to portray or enforce more strongly than is done in the lives both of the Founder of Christianity, and His Disciples."—*Observations on Mental Derangement*, p. 191. (Quoted by Drs. Bucknill and Tuke.)

do with the decadence of the Society of Friends, by giving a very brief sketch of this man's career; because it at once betrays the grievous spectacle, of one endowed with every blessing (though with a constitution somewhat deteriorated, but which might have been developed into health by proper mental and physical discipline), "weaving off life's loom" a fabric of most heterogeneous materials, and most inharmonious colouring. It is a vestment more torturing than the rough cloth of the Frauciseaus, than the stones trodden by the bare and bleeding feet of pilgrims to a far-distant shrine, or the self-inflicted flagellations of a degrading and superstitious creed. For it is accompanied by what no monachist ever realized—the perfect refinement, and cultivated taste, of a Christian gentleman.\*

Joseph John Gurney was educated at Oxford, and had certainly a special aptitude for classical studies, and the enjoyment of general literature. He began, however, at the very earliest, that pernicious system of "anatomizing his piety," journalizing his religious feelings. We have, as in all records of this character, a continuous spectacle of self-created misery, which is only useful to others in the way of warning against a similar indulgence. At twenty-five he records in his Diary "a deep feeling of the terrors of the Lord;" and just previously he had been afflicted with those struggles about dress (for his Quakerism was not hereditary) to which I shall have occasion to allude hereafter. Yet, strangely enough, he recognizes the importance of a religion which is not gloomy, and which has no savour of discontent; of free communication with others on the subject of religious studies, and of the grand

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\* "It is a fact, the importance of which can never be diminished, that the full and true history of one man's life is worth all the books that ever were written about human nature."—(*Bayard Taylor*.)

importance of *practical* Christianity,\* to the exclusion of all secondary points of difference of a theoretical character. At twenty-six he says: "*2nd mo. 6th.* I have been of late in the practice of *waiting* morning and evening in silent attempts at worship." This is a prelude to a long course of wretchedness; for the "tasting of the Lord's sweet presence" is merely an ecstatic and transitory feeling, immediately succeeded by "weakness, and doubtfulness, and clouds of indifference,"—the necessary reaction, in a young mind, of a surfeit of religious "fear," and religious excitement. And so on, ever doubting the sufficiency of the means of grace, and ever looking out for special and personal communications with the Deity, irrespective of all those conditions by which God alone manifests Himself to us. This state of things is not conducive to somatic health; and a constitution not originally strong, though not actually morbid, eventuates in "the highly nervous temperament," to which Mrs. Fry herself alludes. Gurney's practical life is most exemplary. He has an ample competence; he is generous to a degree; very properly thinks that "spending money is better and less injurious to the spirit than saving it unduly," but still doubts whether he "is not exceeding Christian moderation." He marries, and is happy, and begets two children, when his wife glides passively and quietly from the world. He is a widower, and again seeks uxorial consolation. He is married a second time, and "bright, hopeful, and happy was his wedding day." But there is no real, or continuous, or cheerful peace. "Deep discouragement was the clothing of his soul during two nearly silent meetings, chiefly in

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\* I have previously recorded his definition of practical Christianity. It is to be feared that his definition of "a religion without gloom" would have been equally unsatisfactory.

the apprehension that some among them were taking retrograde steps." This feeling increased as years rolled on, and the decadence of the Society became so evident. He writes: "*1st mo. 2nd*, 1829. The condition of that part of the Church of Christ which is within the borders of Quakerism, is a cause, from time to time, of much humiliation and depression. Life is at a low ebb amongst us, I greatly fear; and the removal from the scene of warfare of so many promising young persons, seems, to our finite eye, almost to preclude the hope of revival." At this period we have a letter to his son at school, which is characterised by the usual inconsistency of Quakers—an inconsistency, however, it is right to add, of which they are not themselves conscious. The healthy moral tone which might be given to a young mind by the injunction—"Never speak or think highly of thyself," is immediately negated by the extravagance of the next sentence—"Thou art a poor unworthy creature, a mere worm of earth."\* It has been quaintly and truly observed that

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\* I extract from this letter the following, which is such capital common sense, and healthy morality, that it is quite refreshing to come across it. It is fit for any boy at school, or any man in the world:—"3rd. Rest assured that to be half a Christian and half not will never answer any good purpose. 4th. Be a whole man to everything. At Latin be a whole man to Latin. At geometry or history be a whole man to geometry or history. At play be a whole man to play. At washing and dressing be a whole man to washing and dressing. Above all, at meeting, be a whole man to worship. 6th. Avoid all vain and evil thoughts. Evil thoughts are sin. 7th. Mind thy manners as well as thy morals. Do not be clumsy and awkward. Be always ready to serve and please all around thee. Be swift to give up thy own will to the will of others, in little things: this is the way to be a true gentleman. Finally, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, &c. &c. So farewell, my dearest boy.—J. J. G." This advice is so

“Man is a man, not a worm—‘made a little lower than the angels,’ at first; fallen below himself now, and destined to ‘judge angels’ by and by.”\*

At the age of forty-five Gurney is oppressed with doubts about entering Parliament. “3rd mo. 14th.—Up to the middle of last Sixth-day night, I could find no peace, except in resignation to the parliamentary prospect, *should the Lord clearly open the way for it*; but in that memorable midnight hour my mind became relieved; the prospect gradually disappeared, and after the intense conflict which I have long gone through on the subject, I am now, *through the infinite condescension of my Divine Master*, left without the shadow of a doubt.” How fearfully must these perpetual conflicts have physically, as well as mentally and morally, deteriorated, a highly nervous and sensitive man like Gurney! Two years after these parliamentary struggles, he lost his second wife. Antecedent to these events, during the previous ten years, he was constantly engaged in visits to Friends, for “religious purposes,” in different parts of the country. He had “a concern to visit Ireland” with Mrs. Fry; and to Ireland they both went. Anti-slavery movements (in which Quakers have peculiarly distinguished themselves, but always in combination with “the world”) and literary labours, occupied much of his time; and it should be said that the published works of Joseph John Gurney *on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends*, and on other subjects, constitute the standard

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truly admirable that it is a sufficiently durable foundation on which to build Mr. Kingsley’s healthy wisdom: “Life is very short, and the truest philosophy is to waste none of it, but to cram the maximum of play, as well as of work, into the minimum of time.”

\* *Lectures on the Book of Job*, by Alfred Bowen Evans, p. 243. London, 1856.

modern literature of these singular eclectics. They are characterized by intellectual vigour, perspicuous language, and the true spirit of the Christian gentleman. In 1837, Gurney felt that it was "required of him to visit Friends in America," and he urged the Society to "loose him and let him go." This they did; and the earnest and zealous labourer spent three years on the other side of the Atlantic, engaged in every good work, but in many very miserable and morbid reflections. Some of his American letters are very interesting; but, in all, *feelings* are the prevailing topic, and the reader cannot realize to himself that any real good was being effected. One could have wished that Gurney had not again married on his return from the New World. Such a step was hardly consistent with his lofty spiritual pretensions; and the fact of his children now growing up into companionship made it the less necessary. There appears to have been an austerity about his third wife which, after the bridegroom's own record of the marriage may not seem surprising.\* Was ever such a "serious" wedding before? "5th day, 10th mo. 21st.—The solemn, happy, favoured, marriage-day. I was engaged in prayer in the early part of the meeting, for the manifestation of the Divine sanction, which was indeed fully granted. Afterwards, Katherine Backhouse in an excellent testimony, and H. C. Backhouse in fervent prayer. After the marriage was complete, I had a few sentences to utter, on the victory which is in the faith. The dinner party, cheerful and agreeable, concluded by a short religious opportunity," &c., &c. .

Soon after this Gurney publishes his work on *The Papal and Hierarchical System*, becomes impressed with the

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\* This lady is now living, and is, I am assured, a most "cheerful," admirable, and exemplary woman.

“call” to become a teetotaller, substitutes coffee for infusion of malt and hop, as the general domestic beverage, and banishes the beer-barrcls from the poor old cellars at Earlham. I have previously recorded my belief that the good man’s physical condition was unequal to the withdrawal of this healthy stimulus.

And now commence Continental journeys, and visits to crowned heads, with a view of improving prison discipline, and ameliorating the condition of slaves. Everywhere people were attracted by these novel and grotesque visitations. Meetings were held at which the Spirit presided, and became general Interpreter for words uttered in a foreign tongue.\* It would not be right to say that no good was done by these proceedings; but it may not

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\* Gurney himself knew French and frequently interpreted the language of English Friends, at these foreign gatherings. But on various occasions, in Holland and Germany, these zealous believers in the doctrine of the immediate and personal revelation of the Spirit, were not deterred from giving utterance to their sentiments in their own tongue, when no one present, but themselves, could understand one word of what was said. But there was nothing new in this, as may be seen from the following testimony of an early Friend as to the edification to be derived from a sermon in a “not-understandable” language: “The 3rd day following, we had a meeting at Myrion with the *Welsh* Friends, among whom I was much satisfied; for several of them appearing in testimony in the *British* tongue, which I did not understand; yet being from the Word of Truth in them, as instruments moved thereby, I was as much refreshed as if it had been in my own language; which confirmed me in what I had thought before, that when the Spirit is the same in the preacher and hearer, and is the Truth, the refreshment is chiefly thereby, rather than by the form of words or language, to all that are in the same Spirit at the same time. And this is the universal language of the Spirit, known and understood in all tongues and nations, to them that are born of Him.”—*Journal of the Life of Thomas Story*, p. 177

unreasonably be asked whether there was not a more immediate and useful sphere of duty at home, in England? And this thought frequently crossed the mind of Mrs. Fry. Time wears on; physical weakness and general nervousness increase; the good man droops; Sir Fowell Buxton and Mrs. Fry go out upon the Great Journey, and he himself draws nearer to the confines of the unseen world. And now, when all should be peace and quietness, and the close of so good and exemplary a life perfectly unclouded, we are brought to see this highly sensitive and nervous temperament in the most appalling state of morbid depression. So perverted has become the mental vision that he is unable to connect together in legitimate relationships, the most palpable causes of cause and effect. Now we have visions of almost despair, now of almost peace. "12th mo. 16th, 1845.—I spent almost a sleepless night, not without some deep tribulation of soul: and much lowness and weakness have been my portion this morning," &c., &c. "3rd mo. 28th, 1846.—Cordelia Bayes and Mary Browne came to a luncheon dinner. Cordelia told us that a cheerful heart was the fruit of a thankful spirit. *I was pleased with the remark, not having before put cause and consequence together in the same way.*" "4th mo. 26th, 3rd day morning.—My state is not a high one; much of self-loathing, accompanied by some degree of disquietude, lest I should not, after all, be truly the child of grace."\*

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\* Gurney's letters and journal abound with expressions which show, now his great distress—now his unusual calm: "I am humbled in the dust before the Lord, as a poor guilty earth-worm." "Bowing down my head like a bulrush." "Notwithstanding all the blessings with which we are surrounded, deep lowness sometimes comes over me." "My tears flowed abundantly." "Sometimes the peaceful predominates, and swells into a calm joy." "After the meeting was over,

At last comes a bright gleam of sunshine, and we have a glimpse of the elegant and beautiful mind which might have shaped out to itself a happier religion, and preached a nobler lesson to the world. Gurney loved his garden and his flowers : but even that most innocent pleasure he enjoyed not without some doubt and misgiving. He says (11th mo. 21st.) . . . . " Since breakfast we have had a most agreeable time in the bright chrysanthemised garden. Who has the same pleasure in flowers that I have ? *I trust it is not idolatry.* Can it be that

From Paradise to Paradise my upward course extends,  
My Paradise of flowers on earth, in Heaven's Elysium ends ?"\*

Let us leave him amid the flowers and the sunshine.† Let

I retired alone into the little library, and found vent for the tears of a broken spirit, to my own relief and comfort." " Not quite forsaken." " Poverty, quietness, and deep nothingness." " A blessed absence of excitement, an unbroken tranquility, are my happy portion."

Perhaps Gurney reached the climax of distress, bordering upon Insanity, when on his voyage home from America in 1840, he wrote : " Greyheaded as I am, I am at times haunted by the shadows of old corruptions ; and Satan still plays at seasons on the irritability of my nervous system, fills me with strange fears, and bids words of murmuring (in which *I believe* I have no part), to dart, like lightning, through my almost morbidly sensitive mind."—*Memoirs*, vol. ii., p. 226.

" And, on the other hand, when the spirits are dejected and low, they often let in such an excess of fear as *betrays the succours of reason*, and makes men cruciate themselves with the apprehensions of sin, even when there is really none."—*Dean Young's Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 106, (quoted in Southey's Common-place Book).

\* *Memoirs of the Life of J. J. Gurney*, 2 vols, 8vo.

† One of his dearest Friends—a convert to his own creed, divested of its austerity and its rigid formality—had a passion for flowers, without a thought of idolatry. Mrs. Opie's biographer writes of her :

us think of him only in the beautiful home where there are no doubts or misgivings, and where the waves of this troublesome world shall buffet no more for ever. I have often wondered whether it will hereafter be one of the Saviour's gentle offices, to meet on the very threshold of Heaven those who here, more than all others, strove to see "the King in his beauty," and could only faintly discern Him through the clouds of "wrath" and "terror;" whether the gentle Sympathizer, who bore the cross and the shame, will be standing there to receive these feeble ones, and conduct them into the *Immediate Presence* of ETERNAL LOVE AND MERCY. Who can tell?

I have placed this agonizing (but I am sure truthful) picture here, because I am anxious to call attention to the fact, that such a career as Gurney's is considered by many as a type of the highest form of Christian attainment; whereas I believe it to be a life so distressing to contemplate, by reason of the immense disparity between its aspirations and its achievements, that it is not right to present it to the study of any young person. It is absolutely nothing more or less than a spectacle, of an elegant mind, a tolerably healthy body,\* the purest religious Faith, all capable of working together

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"Flowers, too, were her constant companions; she luxuriated in them, and filled her window-sills with stands of them, and covered her tables with bouquets."—*Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, p. 334. Norwich, 1854.

\* Gurney does not appear to have been afflicted with any organic disease. A nervous and deteriorated constitution was unquestionably his portion. But under a less exacting and cruciating creed, and with greater attention to physical requirements, he would have rallied against the nervous depressions which yielded him such intense agony. Alas! the "seriousness," and the want of cheerfulness so frequently accompanying his Religion, told fearfully against his enervated *physique*.

harmoniously, and producing "*promise of the life which now is*" as well as of "*that which is to come,*" so set to antagonize each other, as to reduce the body to a state of nervous, powerless, and almost hysterical debility; the mind to a condition in which it could scarcely make a logical deduction, or apprehend the plainest truth; and render the Faith, the soul's anchor, the Christian's Hope, such a tattered wreck of despair and misery, as to bring its unhappy victim to the very verge of religious Insanity. And I believe that Quakerism—the attempt to make emotional elevation, and morbid depression, the respective gauges of spiritual fulness or emptiness—must always, in excellent and conscientious persons, more or less eventuate in some such misery as has been here delineated. Alas! too, the purity of intention, the elegant refinement of individual character, the meekness and charity which were unfailing—do but make more evident the dreadful misery of this Creed. "Quietness," in truth, of one sort, the quietness of outward deportment, but not that quietness which we are taught to desiderate, and which is summed up in the language of Divinity, as "quietness and assurance for ever."\*

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\* If one wants to gather some idea of the kind of "quietness and assurance" just now obtaining in Ireland, I would advise him to read a pamphlet, by Archdeacon Stopford, entitled *The Work and the Counterwork*. It has reference to the "Religious Revival in Belfast," and demonstrates but too clearly how largely the emotional excitement among a certain class of females and others, is due rather to physical phenomena than to spiritual influences.

The fanaticism of some of the preachers is almost incredible. And so well do they know the fearful effects they are about to produce, that preparations are made by the office bearers of the Church for the reception of whatever "cases" may require removal and attention. This is called God's work: but, of a truth, it has much more similarity to the Devil's. It is very analogous to the excitement of Fox's early years, and to the "Dancing Epidemic" of the middle ages."

What a strange contrast is presented by these alternations of passive calmness and intense agony, in one so gifted by nature and by grace as was Joseph John Gurney, with the unswerving confidence, and unbounded joy of the great Apostle of the Indies, "who went forth, literally, like the Apostles, carrying neither purse nor scrip, with his Bible and his breviary, a crucifix, and a small silver cup." To Ignatius Loyola, writes his pupil, Francis Xavier:—"So intense and abundant are the delights which God is accustomed to bestow on those who labour diligently in his service, in this barbarous land, that if there be in this life any true and solid enjoyment, I believe it to be this, and this alone."\* What a life of love and labour was this man's! We cannot all live—it is not necessary we all should live—as did this noble hero; and we may not all know his desolate yet sublime ending. But we can all appreciate the true nobility of the Christian missionary, and feel it to be better to die as he did, "in the full assurance of hope, after a life of faithful and devoted service like his, than in a royal sleeping chamber, with no record on high, save that of mercies ill-requited, and years spent in vain."†

Had Gurney only possessed a tithe of this man's self-confidence, how far happier had been his career! And had it been combined with that manly cheerfulness which bespeaks equanimity and peace, he would have rivalled another noble Christian, though, strictly speaking, material labourer, whose Journal contains more reality, and truth, and information of the loftier sort, than all the records of spasmodic religionists. "I can see," says Dr. Kane, writing with characteristic spirit, "I can see strength of

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\* *God's Heroes and the World's Heroes*, by Rev. J. H. Gurney, p. 252. London 1858.

† *Ibid.* p. 266.

system in *cheerfulness of heart*.\* The best prophylactic is a hopeful, sanguine, temperament; the best cure, moral resistance—that spirit of combat against every trial which is alone true bravery.” O let it be remembered where, and under what awfully depressing influences, this was recorded. And, says another writer, whom I have before mentioned:—“Next to health of body, I mention that healthiness of the soul, which consists in calm and equable animal spirits. I want a natural, unaffected, quiet, uniform, *cheerfulness*. The mind must be at ease. There must be rest and repose there; freedom from solicitude, despondency, and perturbation; no sinking of the spirit of man under frequent or constant depression and gloom. Nothing can be either done or enjoyed in life, if the mind is liable to be torn or tormented thus. It unfits for exertion; it destroys energy; it withers hope; it represses ambition; it makes the will to vacillate, and the judgment to falter; it terrifies and alarms, or crushes and annihilates; it makes a man timid, dastardly, uncertain, useless! . . . . I want him to walk as a child of the day, not like a thing creeping and cowering in the darkness. If not always or often among flowers and verdure, at least let him believe

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\* Our great Addison also speaks of the importance of cheerfulness:—“I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as an habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth who are subject to the greatest depression of melancholy: on the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; *cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity.*”—*Spectator*, p. 381.

and rejoice that such things *are* . . . . I want the morning to find him without anxiety—the night to descend without bringing with it sleeplessness or terror. Let the darkness and the light be both alike to him; a calm, tranquil, joyous heart, prompting and furnishing ‘his matins duly and his even-song.’”\*

It is a judicious combination of all these things which constitutes that beautiful and harmonious symmetry, in which alone is treasured the highest form of Christian virtue.†

As the question of *imperfect education* will be brought under our notice in another section of this Essay, I shall merely note the obvious fact, that a thoroughly healthy mind implies and includes a comprehensive system of training and instruction.

V. *The singularly obstructive character of the Society's Socio-political relationship to the world—comprising the questions of the Lawfulness of Oaths, of War, and of Ecclesiastical Imposts; the peculiarities of Dress, Language, and Deportment; the prohibition of Sports and Amusements; the non-recognition of Distinctive Social Inequalities, and the prohibitions placed upon Trade.*

Every civilized society is regulated by certain laws, and

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\* *Is it Possible to make the Best of Both Worlds?* by Thos. Binney, pp. 31, 32.

† The following is an admirably drawn picture of a thoroughly healthy Christian:—“In fact, Sir Thomas More was an instance of the rarest class of men, he was a *symmetrical man*: I mean by that, a man every part of whose nature is equally developed. He was a man of no eccentricities, or follies, or weaknesses, but well proportioned, well disciplined throughout; a man equal to anything; without intrigue, without fear; manly yet mirthful; going through this world as consciously on a journey to a better; with duty as an ever-present guide, and peace as an inseparable companion: *equally and serenely good*.”—*Lectures on Great Men*, by Frederic Myers, M.A., p. 199. London, 1856.

controlled by certain usages ; and is under the influence of certain conventional customs, which are more or less acceptable to the community at large, according to individual taste and temperament. It is generally felt that the minority must yield to the majority, in supporting that protective system which has been legalized by the wisdom of our ancestors, and made conformable to the requirements of an age essentially progressive. As that is the best educational process which moulds its subjects into the greatest usefulness ; and as that is the purest religion which eventuates in the highest individual excellence ; so that is the best citizenship which adapts its members to the civil and social institutions of their country. The perfection of a society lies in the congruousness of its individual parts, and the collective harmony of its entire strength.

Our friends the Quakers are here again the most wilful and determined obstructionists. Believing that a continuous warfare against the wickedness of the world, and against social conventionalisms, are synonymous, their career has been one of once active, and now passive, resistance to "the powers that be." Though they are of opinion (to adopt Barclay's own words) that the Scriptures "are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners ;" yet their controversial works are arguments to prove that modern manners ought to be Bible manners, that primitive customs and observances which obtained 1800 years ago, and were sanctioned by the Apostles and by Christ himself, ought now to be prevalent, and still constitute our civil and social code. Let us consider some of these points on which Quakers are so singularly antagonistic, most of which are embraced under Barclay's 15th Proposition—*Concerning Salutations, Re-*

*creations*, &c. Perhaps it will be more convenient to consider the entire subject according to the Apologist's divisional arrangement:—

1. "That it is not lawful to give to men such flattering titles, as your Holiness, your Majesty, your Eminency, your Excellency, your Grace, your Lordship, your Honour, &c., nor using of those flattering words, commonly called compliments.

2. "That it is not lawful for Christians to kneel, or prostrate themselves to any man, or to bow the body, or uncover the head to them.

3. "That it is not lawful for Christians to use superfluities in apparel as are of no use, save for ornament and vanity.

4. "That it is not lawful to use games, sports, plays, nor, among other things, comedies among Christians, under the notion of Recreations, which do not agree with Christian silence, gravity, and sobriety, &c.

5. "That it is not lawful for Christians to swear at all under the Gospel, not only not vainly nor in their common discourse, which was also forbidden under the Mosaical Law, but even not in judgment before the magistrate.

6. "That it is not lawful for Christians to resist evil, or to war or fight in any case." \*

These two first headings may be taken together.

Now if men were carried back (which Heaven forbid!) to a state of primitive simplicity, or primitive anything else, we could hardly, even then, understand the persistent conduct of Quakers in respect of *salutations*, and those formal courtesies which are included under the term *compliments*. We do not, however, in any sense desire a restoration to primitiveness, and we do not admit the authority of the Bible in social questions, which involve the sacrifice of no

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\* *Barclay's Apology*. Prop. xv.

Christian principle, and no Christian practice. A true and comprehensive philosophy bids us compare the times in which opinions were delivered, and precepts enjoined, with these latter days, and test their applicability to the present advanced period of civilization. Some things are only given for an age, a particular generation; other things are for every age, and for all time. And surely we are prone to admit the influence of concurrent circumstances and facts, in questions of a purely doctrinal character. It may be necessary (and, indeed, it *was* necessary, which accounts for the startling difference between St. James and St. Paul) to enforce the doctrine of justification by faith, with peculiar vigour in one age, and amongst one people, and that of good works with equal vigour in and to another. What should we gain—in what way would society be benefited—by a return to primitive manners and customs, and to an obsolete phraseology? Is not our very life-blood sustained by the feeling that “onward” is our watchword? And

“I doubt not thro’ the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen’d by the process of the suns.”

It is as obvious as anything can be that we are living in a world of material, moral, social, and (it is to be hoped) spiritual progress. We are placed in—that is to say, we constitute—a Society, which, by general consent, requires fencing out into various social partitions, by the definitions of titular consideration, and the outward manifestations of courtesy and respect. The individual, or the aggregate of individuals, failing to comply with these requirements, are at once placed in a position of obstructive antagonism to the great majority of the species; the result of which, in one age, is political and religious persecution; in another and more tranquil period of

liberty of conscience—a conviction of singular purity of motive, and singular obstinacy of bearing. The decadence of the Society of Friends has been immensely influenced by these facts; and Admiral Penn's parting words to his Quaker son have not been, and never will be, realized: "Son William, if you and your friends keep to your plain way of preaching and living, you will make an end of the priests." The "end of the priests," however, will come from another source than this—a source springing from themselves, which knows not charity nor Christian love. And it has been well and forcibly said that the real peril of the Church of England lies in "the fact of Puritans and Romanizers existing side by side—the fact of angry and confronting Societies for Foreign Missions and for Home Missions, and for every branch of the Church's work—the fact of 'Tractarians and Evangelicals'—the fact of Mr. Gorham, and Mr. Denison, and Mr. Poole—the fact of the Bishop of Exeter and the Bishop of Ripon—the fact of Exeter Hall preachers and those of St. Barnabas"—the fact that these individuals, and Societies, and organized ecclesiastical instrumentalities, are for the most part, according to their sectional distribution, trying to undo to-day the work which others did yesterday—that they have no kindly or sympathetic feelings in common, no large-hearted charity, no desire to win souls apart from winning them through a particular channel, and by one particular door.

It may be true, indeed—to return to the subject of titular distinctions—that, as Barelay states, we are called upon to dignify with the title of "Excellency" those who have no excellency in them: or to style "Your Grace" one who appears to be an enemy to Grace; or to name "Your Honour" one who is known to be base and ignoble. "I wonder," says the Apologist, "what law of man, or what

patent, ought to oblige me to make a lie, in calling good evil, or evil good?" No law at all, certainly. You are evading the question, which is—not 'Am I bound to do so and so?' but, 'If the general rule is to do so and so, have I any right to complain at the consequences of my omission to fall in with the popular usage, as long as those consequences do not assume the character of persecution?' Many good men are sensible of the anomalies to which you allude; but they do not look upon the customs of Society (which, strictly speaking, might, as far as the plain letter of Scripture is concerned, be negatively incorrect) in the severe light that you do, and therefore they are content to fall in with the popular apprehension. The plain case is this: You Friends are living grouped together (a real insulation) in a social community, with an immense number of others who believe in the theory of mutual dependence, and reciprocal action, and communication with God through many mediate instrumentalities, rather than through direct personal and miracular visitations. This community constitutes what is called Society. And that Society, for protection and legitimate purposes, which all but yourselves recognize as essential to its integrity, has instituted a social code more or less conformed to its intuitive perceptions of right and wrong, and to the general requirements of civilization. It is generally believed that this code is based upon Christian principles, and answers to the main requirements of the Gospel of Christ; but it is not believed that the perfectly symmetrical system shadowed out in Scripture is most likely to be attained by a strict conformity to primitive manners and usages, the beauty of that system lying in its power of self-adaptation. As a member of the natural world, you may, if you please, retire to back-settlements, and become, if possible, more an isolation of humanity than you are at present. But if you

remain for purposes of material advantage in an artificial state of Society, you cannot separate yourself from the courtesy of general compliance, without incurring to a certain extent penalties which are not persecutions, and which merely indicate that the social community is an accumulation of links binding man to his fellow-man—each individual being more or less required to contribute to its sustentation. It is believed, also, that if you tear down these landmarks (for to a certain extent they *are* landmarks) of civilization, you are committing a gratuitous aggression upon others, which is fairly entitled to the visitation of a punishment which shall exclude you from our sympathy. To teach a man who is dependent upon you, and to whom you must know you are superior in every material and immaterial sense, that he is your equal, and that he is to show you no more outward respect than he would to the veriest ruffian that could be met with, is at once to sow the seed of a social communism.\* It

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\* Quakers repudiate altogether this communism ; but it is the inevitable tendency of a system where all men are accounted equal, and where a servant may “have a concern” to reprove his master at any moment, by reason of spiritual suggestions.

“In no Society is a man, if I may use the expression, so much of a man, as in that of the Quakers, or in no Society is there such an equality of rank and privileges.”—*A Portraiture of Quakerism*, by Thomas Clarkson, M.A., vol. i., p. 252.

“For it is in the essence of the Quaker Discipline, that every member should watch over another for his good. *There are no exceptions as to persons. The servant has as much right to watch over his master with respect to his religious conduct and conversation, as the master over his servant ; and he has a right, if his master violate the discipline, to speak to him in a respectful manner for so doing.* Nor would a Quaker-servant if he were well grounded in the principles of the Society, and felt it to be his duty, want the courage to speak his mind upon such occasions. There have been

would be wiser to instruct him in the theory of relative duties and responsibilities, and to show him how the notion of any kind of equality is opposed by all facts and experience. Everything antagonizes such an idea. The very specialties by which we are surrounded individually and collectively negative such a proposition, for (as has been truly observed) they may "affect every thought and act to the latest hour of life." There is, in truth, no analogy to this system of equality either in the physical, moral, intellectual, social, or spiritual world.\* One man is stronger

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instances where this has happened, and where the master in the true spirit of his religion has not felt himself insulted by such interference, but has looked upon his servant afterwards as more worthy of his confidence and esteem."—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 97, 98.

\* William Penn was brought to a full recognition of social gradations and distinctions. "When Penn arrived a second time in America, there were many who doubted the lawfulness of retaining slaves; yet on looking at the matter calmly he felt certain that between the two races there existed an intellectual inequality, which no Act of Assembly could remove, and which must of necessity preclude social equality, until by process of education and lapse of time, the negro had been raised in the scale of being."—*William Penn, an Historical Biography*, by William Hepworth Dixon, p. 390.

"Une certaine inégalité dans les conditions qui entretient l'ordre et la subordination est l'ouvrage de Dieu, ou suppose une loi divine : une trop grande disproportion et telle qu'elle se remarque parmi les hommes, est leur ouvrage, ou la loi des plus forts."—*La Bruyere*, vol. ii., p. 213.

Nor must it be forgotten that many of the extravagant indecencies of early Quaker times were avowedly suggested by the Holy Spirit, when men and women went about "in all the nudity of nature" to indicate our nothingness and our equality. "Some went naked by couples, as a sign of how the beasts went into the ark." And when respectable persons sought to cover these nude performers, who said "It is not we, but God that goeth naked in us," they were rebuked, and told that "they had hindered the work of the Lord." These indecencies too were defended by Thomas Story, who, speak-

or healthier than another, by nature, or by the right use which he makes of nature. One man is by inheritance more intellectually gifted than another ; or, assuming all men in this sense to be equally gifted, one man has made (what Mr. Buckle calls) better “progress of opportunity” than another. The same may be said of our moral nature, whether you appeal to Socrates or St. Paul, to George Fox or Joseph John Gurney. Such also is the law of the social system, the gradations of which were recognized by Christ himself, when he bade his tempters “render unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar’s, and to God the things which were God’s.” A wealthy man is not only rich in worldly goods, but he is rich also in responsibility. If he adjusts and properly balances the two, by a well-regulated distribution of his means he will, whether he be a religious man or not, do a good in his generation which shall not die with him, but pass on to those who are to succeed him. And if he adds to his moral excellence a chaste and lofty piety, which developes itself in the exercise of every Christian virtue, is he not one of the many instrumentalities by which God deals with his poor and erring ones? And so is he not worthy of all homage from weaker brethren, who have benefited by his charities, and profited by his example? Will God hereafter accuse a poor and unlettered one of idolatry, because he made decent obeisance to an individual who has proved to him the only personal

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ing of the command of the Lord to Isaiah, “to go and loose the sackcloth from off his loins,” &c. says : “It was not inconsistent with the Lord to command this sign ; nor is nakedness any indecency in his sight, since every creature came naked from his all-creating hand. Thou canst not therefore (he concludes) make it appear that those Quakers [who indecently exposed themselves] were not commanded of God to do as they did in that case.”—*Journal of the Life of Thomas Story*, p. 49.

revelation which his mind could gather in of something more than human excellence? O no! the Almighty would be as likely to rebuke the lilies of His hand for bending their heads to the storm, or the many flowers of the field for opening their tiny cups to the mid-day splendour of the Sun. And a poor man also is not only poor in the things of the world, but poor also in opportunity and responsibility. The circle of his dependents, perhaps, is limited to a scolding wife and dirty children. But these two—the rich and the poor—bear to each other in the social system a relationship which cannot be disturbed without shaking to its foundations the God-created institution of inequality.

It is so likewise in the spiritual world. Not only are the specialties of our natural endowments, as also of our social conditions, from the very cradle to the grave, so varying, and so essentially different from each other, as to make it an easy thing for one man to realize religious truth, and constitute himself a home for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; whilst another, within sound of the “sabbath-bells,” and with no particular predilection for vicious courses, has not a chance from the very beginning to the end of life. Is it nothing to a man to have *begun* life with religion?—to have seen its attractiveness in the example of a godly father, or in the tender solitudes of a righteous mother? How often has one tempted to fall in later years, long after those who nurtured his young life, have gone down to their graves, turned to the memories of those early days, and been saved thereby from a fall which seemed all but inevitable! Is there no specialty in this, favourable to spiritual influences and to religious growth? Has not such an one inherited an advantage which has shrouded him from

his cradle, and which one who lost his parents while he was but an infant, and was left penniless, was never gifted with? Is there any equality in this? We are accustomed not sufficiently to consider how largely spiritual advantages may be the mere accident of material ones. It is an easy thing to be religious when you have but small opportunities for being vicious. Look at this picture by a modern word-painter, and say whether it is not a truthful and appalling delineation of the daily life of thousands of our younger population. Are there no material influences here to counteract and destroy intellectual and spiritual vigour, and to proclaim aloud the strange inequality of our lot? "The roar of machinery deafens the ear of tender childhood. The boy grows pale upon the loom, and the girl grows stunted by the whirling wheels, who should be drinking in knowledge at its fountains, or rushing from school to play with the lambs upon the flowery sward, or chasing the butterfly by the laughing stream, or gathering health and strength, beauty and symmetry, where the bee collects her honied stores for working days and winter-time. The click of shuttles and deafening noise of manufactory are in ears that should be filled with no sound but the shouts and laughter of play, the melody of singing birds, or the hum of the busy school."\*

The learned author of the *Apology*, deals largely, according to wont, in platitudes respecting the impropriety of honouring this individual more than that, or in giving any the outward homage of obeisance. To say that "these honours are not that honour which cometh from above,"

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\* *The City, Its Sins and Sorrows*, by Thomas Guthrie, D.D., p. 101. Edinburgh, 1857.

is to state what everybody very well knows, and is entirely able to appreciate. So also of the affirmation that "all the children of Lucifer are possessed with the same ambitious proud mind, seeking and coveting titles of honour." But it is a gratuitous assumption that a man is necessarily in league with Lucifer, because he has been taught to manifest outward as well as inward respect to his friends. He may be a very good Christian, doing his duty to God, and those by whom he is surrounded, let him be possessed of what title he may, or let him look forward to the reception of such title as the reward of an honourable ambition. Is the illustrious Historian of our Third William to be condemned as "a Child of Lucifer," because he has received at the hands of the Sovereign who appreciates his services, a titular distinction which imparts a social elevation, in accordance with the analogy of nature, and with the intellectual superiority and labour of its recipient? Is the great theatre of hereditary and acquired distinctions to be monopolized by a starched democracy prepared to revolutionize the world by forced interpretations of Scripture, and the narrowest views of human life and duty? Is the system of rewards and punishments to be abandoned with impunity? Are we to be reduced to the dead level of social communism; and are those who recognize the propriety of outward demonstrations of respect, to be told by a few exclusionists, who, as a corporate Society (in spite of individual excellencies which I have not been backward in acknowledging) have been most distinguished by the grotesqueness of their apparel, the affected simplicity of their manners, and the passive neutrality of a frigid indifferentism, that thereby they are conforming to the spirit of this world, and that their works are of their father the Devil?

Nor do the æsthetics of manners and of costume need any illustration from the conduct of Cornelius and Peter, or from that of an angel and St. John ; and minds only of the most perverted character could make reference to these personages (as Barclay does), and solemnly affirm that to take off your hat to your neighbour, like a gentleman, is to "rob God of His glory." In this manner the littleness of even an educated mind can connect a man's hat with the sublimest thing presented to our imagination. He who can thus think and speak of Almighty Goodness, must have not only most imperfect apprehensions, but most trivial conceptions, of God's dealings with His creatures ; and attribute to Him personal qualities which are happily at variance with the general notions of that Being who is "slow to anger, of long suffering, and great kindness."

The real fact is (as I have before intimated) that society does not pretend to take its manners, any more than it does its science, from Scripture. Why, indeed, should it ? Have not improvements been effected in both, to ignore which is simply to affirm yourself to be an unprogressive fool ? And may not the Gospel be made more available, may it not be more adapted to the cultivation of Christian character, and to the salvation of man, by our recognition of the help which it may derive from other aids, and from other not less Godlike sources ?

"Beauty, good and knowledge are three sisters  
That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears."

And are not these three sisters the beautiful handmaids of Religion in thousands of happy homes, generating and sustaining "a perpetual sunshine," wooing and winning the divine influences of Grace ?

“I believe”—says one who to our finite apprehension was called away too early, and before his work was done,—“I believe that no one can form right judgments of the significance of man’s destiny or duties—or adequately even appreciate the characters of great men—without endeavouring to borrow light from a wider field of vision than is contained within the boundary lines of that Special Revelation of God, which is written with pen and with ink. Truly all that relates to the discharge of our own personal every-day duties, and to the understanding of our own individual responsibilities as members of the Church of Christ—we may attain to with no other knowledge or thoughtfulness but about the instincts and experience of our own nature, and the ordinary worship and teaching of the Church. But would we attempt to be something wiser than this, would we try to understand and sympathize with the position and the interests of other portions of God’s great human family—then, I say, I feel sure that we must take into our consideration very much more than these things: we must add to the History of the Jews an authentic History of the World, and to the great facts of the Catholic Creed the great Facts also of Nature and Experience.”\*

Of a truth this attempt to isolate the Gospel of Christ which is *unprogressive* as an abstract fact—“the same yesterday and to-day and for ever”—from the beautiful handmaids of morality, and physical science, and social improvements, which have power to make it progressive as a relative fact, and place it within the reach of many who would not otherwise receive it, by leading them “from nature up to nature’s God”—this attempt, I say, to isolate the Gospel, and make it a standard of appeal, in

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\* *Lectures on Great Men*, by Frederic Myers, M.A., p. 48.

matters which have nothing to do with religion—was what led alike in earlier times to the persecution of the “starry Galileo,” and in these later times to the decadence of Quakerism.\* And this decadence in an age when is day by day recognized more fully the help which these hand-maids are capable of giving in Gospel ministrations—how they can weave into harmonious blending the triple compound of body, mind, and soul, and bring us nearer to God through manifold instrumentalities and by varied means. Surely this constitutes that comprehensive wisdom which adapts the religion of Christ to every capacity, and makes it what it was designed to be; but, alas! what it is not, even to men and women who think of scarcely anything else—“The shadow of a Great Rock in a weary land.”

It were wise for all men to receive at once and for ever the fact, that the God who has chosen to communicate to us Eternal Truth through the channel of men as weak and fallible as ourselves, has permitted, for purposes known only to Himself, the Divine Light of His heavenly endowment to be stamped with the infirmity of human agencies. And it cannot be doubted that if it had been reserved for these later times, to witness through the medium of mortality the first revelations of those writings which we term Scripture, we should still have the same records of doctrinal verity, but clothed in a less obsolete phraseology, modified by the facts of a more recent history, and of a more extended tradition, and freed from those unscientific disfigurements which are up to the standard of physical knowledge in Apostolic days, and which are only disfigurements by comparison with that

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\* “Indeed in every page of history we meet with fresh evidence of the little effect religious doctrines can produce upon a people, unless preceded by intellectual culture.”—*Buckle's History of Civilization in England*, p. 239.

modern standard which it has been permitted us to attain to. So, too, if the Hebrew legislator—the prophet of the Elder Dispensation—were again to pen his sublime narrative, the first words of which might still be, “In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth,” he would tell us in perspicuous language, by referring to objective geological facts, that that “Beginning” embraced myriads of ages antecedent to the first Mosaic record, which (in the opinion of many) chronicles only the Adamite creation.\*

If we look at the Bible in this way, without trying to make it out to be more than it really is, or was ever intended to be, we shall be better able to apprehend its sublimest truths, and feed thereupon our weary souls with true comfort and assurance. Whereas, if we try to force its meaning, to give it a significance foreign to its divine intentions, to ignore the imperfections incidental to the medium of its communication to us, and reconcile those parts which are irreconcilable, we become lost in the bewilderment which leads to “the luxury of doubt and disquiet.” For, after all, if the astronomical hintings of Holy Writ clash with the exactness of modern astronomical discoveries; if the Mosaic record and modern Geology are not to be reconciled; if the physical laws which toil and time have opened to us, tell us that we *do* know of the wind “whence it cometh and whither it goeth”—what do these facts prove? Only that it was

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\* It is hardly necessary, though it may be desirable, to observe, that many geologists are of opinion that modern discoveries are perfectly reconcilable with the Mosaic record. It does not appear to me at all necessary to force this reconciliation, either for the establishment of a physical science or for the integrity and authenticity of Holy Writ. Neither Geology nor Judaism (as Mr. Baden Powell has ably demonstrated) can affect the vital truths of Christianity.

not consistent with the designs of Almighty Wisdom to anticipate the material results of scientific labour, and deprive man of the stimulus to hopeful and progressive knowledge, which exercises so beneficial an influence upon the species, by revealing even to "His servant Moses" what was known only to Himself.

Such a course, indeed, has hampered us with doubts and tried the steadfastness of our faith. But does not this constitute our discipline? And has not this discipline the assurance of continuity in that however much we learn we still feel ourselves to be (what Sir Isaac Newton said we were) "children gathering shells upon the shores of an unknown ocean"? "The more knowledge we get, the greater capacity we have unsatisfied." \* How many ardent and aspiring natures have been absorbed in the sense of this great truth—even to the reaction of weariness and oppression! "I am tired," said one who died but young; "I am tired of trying to know, seeing how little we *can* know." † But there is a comfort. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known."

3. *That it is not lawful for Christians to use superfluities in Apparel as are of no use, save for Ornament and Vanity.*

Though the rigid adoption of "plainness of apparel" may seem to be a very trifling thing, in connexion with the life and stability of a Christian Society, there is abundant reason to think that by their peculiar views on the æsthetics of dress, Friends have largely paved the way to the dismemberment of their corporate organization. For, in truth, neither plainness of speech, nor peculiarity of

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\* Bp. Jackson.

† Alfred Robert Vaughan.

dress, nor singularity of manner are unimportant facts, if it can be shown that they have a relative bearing upon the numerical force of a religious sect. They become anything but trifles, both singly and in the aggregate, when they expose the younger and sensitive members of this strange eclecticism to unnecessary trials. Life is made up of trifles, by which we are often much more influenced, and which are often more difficult to contend with, than larger and more momentous incidents; and it has become a matter of general observation that the "still small courtesies" of society, and even the customary regulations as to costume, are not to be violated with impunity. It is admitted, too, by those who have most intimate acquaintance with human nature, and with individual character, that we can often buckle ourselves up to face a formidable danger, when we lack the energy to resist the gradual undermining of a series of petty influences, or to stand against the assaults of apparently trifling enemies.

I have before alluded to the fact that George Fox adopted a leather dress, in that it was quiet and unobtrusive, and would require but little reparation. William Penn tells us that the dress of male Friends originated in a distinct revelation from heaven. It is worthy of transcription, as showing the visionary mental condition of an hysterico-cataleptic female, whom we are called upon to credit, as having received a direct and personal communication from the Holy Spirit.

"A sister of the family of Penn, of Penn, Buckinghamshire, a young woman delighting in the finery and pleasures of the world, was seized with a violent illness that proved mortal to her. In the time of her sickness she fell into great distress of soul, bitterly bewailing the want of that inward peace which makes a death-bed easy to the righteous. After several days' languishing a little conso-

lation appeared after this manner. She was *some hours in a kind of trance*; she apprehended she was brought into a place where Christ was, by whom, could she but deliver her petition, she hoped to be relieved. But her endeavours increased her pain; for as she pressed to deliver it, *He turned his back upon her*, and would not so much as look towards her; but that which added to her sorrow was, that she beheld others admitted. However, she gave not over importuning Him, and when almost ready to faint, and her hope to sink, *He turned one side of his face towards her*, and reached forth his hand and received her request, at which her troubled soul found immediate consolation. Turning to those about her, she repeats what had befallen her, adding, ‘Bring me my new clothes, take off the lace and finery,’ and charged her relations not to deck and adorn themselves after the manner of the world; for that the Lord Jesus, whom she had seen, *appeared to her in the likeness of a plain countryman, without any trimming or ornament whatever*, and that his servants ought to be like Him.”\*

Now we know, from Penn’s own confession, that as h

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\* *No Cross, No Crown*, by William Penn, part ii. p. 138. This vision is very analogous to those which unhappy young women, of peculiar temperament and singularly weak minds, are now experiencing under the Religious Revival in Ireland. In the pamphlet to which I have before alluded, by Archdeacon Stopford, there is a case recorded of a young woman who declared she had been admitted into heaven, and seen God himself. If there be some good in this Revival, it is impossible to over-estimate its frightful evil. It is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of women, “praying to be struck” (*i. e.* converted), are being invited by fanatical preachers into the dreadful mazes of hysteria; and that scores are being driven into a state of insanity. It may be worth while to ask whether Jesus Christ ever produced hysteria, or drove people into madness, by *His* preaching? “Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord?”

drew nearer to the close of life, he thought he had greatly misused it, "wasting good effort" upon very unnecessary trifles. In the preface to one of his works, entitled *Fruits of Solitude*, he records:—"I have now had some time I can call my own, a property I have ever before been short of, in which I have taken a view of myself and of the world, observed wherein I have gone wrong, or wasted good effort; and I have come to the conclusion that if I had to lead my life over again, I could serve God, my neighbour, and myself, better than I have done, and have seven precious years of time to spare, though I am not an old man yet, and certainly have not been one of the idlest."

Whatever may have been Penn's early regulations with regard to dress, and the general conduct of his domestic establishment, we have pretty good evidence that in later years he was far from insensible to the pleasures of the table, the amusements of the world, or the superfluities of apparel. And I deem it right to refer to this fact, because the Admiral's son is one of whom Quakers have been proud, and the supposed slur upon whose memory by Lord Macaulay they have so strongly resented. It had been well for them had they adopted the matured, as well as the first and extravagant, opinions of this early apostle of their creed.

It is clear that Penn had passed through the fire of persecution, without finding that his principles or his comforts were much improved by it. He saw when it was too late for the principles, though, happily, not too late for some little after-taste of ease and retirement, that he had exposed himself to much unnecessary hardship, and that his cause would have made more substantial progress, had the lives and conduct of those who initiated it been characterized by a less intemperate bearing, by more discreet language, by some sort of respect for the customs

and conventionalisms of the age, and a wise consideration for the feelings of the people. His relapse, therefore, into harmless pleasures was liable to, and of course received, that misconstruction which men are ever ready to put upon the motives and conduct of their neighbours. And our Friend was censured instead of applauded, for a tardy recognition of the uselessness of self-imposed suffering in a cause which was not worthy of him.

William Penn promulgated a very wholesome maxim in respect of dress,\* which he seems himself to have rather exceeded: for we are told by his biographer that he was vain of his personal attire. "The dress and habits of the Penns of Pennsbury, had as little of the sourness and formality which have been ascribed to the early followers of George Fox, as the mansion and its furnishings." "The ladies dressed like gentlewomen, wore caps and buckles, silk gowns and golden ornaments. Penn had no less than four wigs in America, all purchased in the same year, at a cost of nearly £20. To innocent dances and country fairs he not only made no objection, but countenanced them by his own and his family's presence."†

Yet this was the man who, at an earlier and less discreet period of his life, standing covered in the presence of his *uncovered* Sovereign, said: "Keep on thy hat Friend Charles;" and who, when under the influence of a fanaticism which now had happily forsaken him, wrote: "Dancing is the devil's procession; and he that entereth into a dance entereth into his procession. The devil is the guide, the middle, and the end of the dance. As

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\* "Choose thy clothes with thine own eyes, and not with another's; neither unshapely nor fantastical, and for use and decency, not for pride."—*Some Fruits of Solitude*.

† *William Penn, an Historical Biography*, by W. Hepworth Dixon, p. 385.

many paces as a man maketh in dancing, so many paces doth he make to go to hell.”\*

The sumptuousness, indeed, of Penn's mode of life, during his second sojourn in America, was something truly splendid. “A country house, with an ample garden, was the governor's passion; and he spared neither care nor money to make the grounds of Pennsbury a little Eden.” We are told of “a great quantity of damask table-cloths, and fine napkins.” “Anne Nichols was his cook, and he used to observe in his pleasantry, ‘Ah! the Book of Cookery has quite outgrown the Bible, and I fear it is read oftener—to be sure it is of more use.’ His cellars were well stocked; Canary, claret, sack, and Madeira, being the favourite wines consumed by his family and his guests.” In one of his letters to his steward, he writes:—“Pray send us some two or three smoked haunches of venison and pork—get them from the Swedes; also some smoked shads and beefs;’ adding, with a delicious unction, ‘The old priest at Philadelphia had rare shads.’”†

After his final return to this country, Penn was again anxious to seek the shores of the New World. “Every month he seemed finally determined to go over, as things (which were now in a bad state) had always gone on smoothly under his own control. But his want of means continually interfered. At the end of this year he wrote to his agent:—‘I assure thee that *if the people would only settle £600 a-year upon me as governor, I would hasten over. . . . Cultivate this among best Friends.*’ But the best Friends would do nothing.”‡

It should seem, therefore, that even the first disciples of

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\* *No Cross, No Crown*, by William Penn, part ii., p. 96.

† *William Penn*, an Historical Biography, pp. 382, 383.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 419.—*Bancroft's History of the United States*. London, 1853.

Quakerism could grow weary, as they well might, of persecution and self-denial, and sigh, like other men, for the flesh-pots of Egypt. The lofty spirit of Divine Apostleship had died out. A long series of trials had made the founder of the Pennsylvanian colony not insensible to the good things of this life, and not over-anxious to labour "without money and without price," for Truth and the Gospel's sake.

I cannot help believing, from what has been communicated to me, and from what I have observed in one of the strongholds of the Society of Friends, that their peculiarities of dress have exercised a marked influence in estranging from them the younger generation. Nor is this to be wondered at. In such an age as the present one, when competition is so great, and so much turns upon an advantageous position in the general social system, ordinarily endowed and educated minds fail to perceive that the excellence of Christian character, or the usefulness of a Christian gentleman, turn upon the adoption of a particular, and that too a grotesque, costume. They will not, therefore, subject themselves to a yoke which excludes them, upon the low principle of a tectotal pledge, from many opportunities of social pleasures, and not a few worldly advantages. They perceive, from their brief youthful experience within their hereditary fold, that there is danger to the soul's healthfulness in the constant imbibition of the belief, that to "use" the world is only another name for "abusing it." "Moreover," says Mr. Maurice, "the young Quakers look about, and ask themselves what it means that they are kept from the world? If the world means those who do not walk in the light, there is a world within the Society as well as without it."\*

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\* *The Kingdom of Christ, or Hints to a Quaker*, by F. D. Maurice, M.A. London, 1842. Vol. i. p. 65.

They are sensible that it is morally wrong, and cowardly, *not* to “use” a thing because many unprincipled men *have* “abused” it.\* And they have learned that “there is always a departure from the true spirit of the Christian life, when importance is attached to forms and means, as if they were at once substance and end; and when the idea of excellence gets transferred from the special attainment itself, to the outward sign or profession of pursuing it.”

Joseph John Gurney foresaw the tide which was setting in against “plainness of apparel,” and he vainly used his influence to stem it. Mrs. Fry, who certainly knew human nature better than her brother, and had more extensive sympathies with human weakness, had a clear apprehension of the error of throwing impediments in the way of Christian growth, by trying to link petty trivialities to great principles. She says: “It is certainly a very serious thing to put upon young persons any cross in their religious course, which Christ does not call them to bear.”† This sentiment was only the natural result of another, founded upon personal observation:—“It must be remembered that no study is equal to that of mankind, and nothing so likely to enlarge the mind as society, and the good and cultivated of any nation.”‡

Surely no intelligent person can seriously maintain that He who said, “Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not,” calls upon any young person, or any adult, to wear a particular dress which more or less, in proportion to its grotesqueness and its infrequency, excites the ridicule of mankind. It may be near the truth to state, that any class-dress, not appertaining to a distinct

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\* “From the abuse of a thing to the non-use the consequence is not always valid.”—*Evelyn's Diary*.

† *Memoir of Life*, vol. ii., p. 118.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. ii., p. 146.

worldly profession (such as the military or the clerical), which is not regulated by pecuniary exigencies, is a false system, based upon an ignorance of social requirements and necessities. It is obvious that the fallacy of that system is made more glaring to public apprehension, in proportion to the ludicrous nature of the apparel which it inculcates, and the extent of its deviation from that in general usage. Yet we have before us a Society gifted with the experience of two centuries, struggling for what it calls the sacredness of its principles, founding those principles upon a false estimate of human life, and responsibility, and divine precepts, as plainly stated in the Gospel.

I do not shrink from affirming, that to take an honest, open-hearted, generous boy, and dress him in a garb which is certain to excite the ridicule of other boys, telling him at the same time that a voluntary subjection to ridicule is "a testimony to the cause of Truth," is to tell him—what all young Quakers are finding out and by their desertion testifying—what has a much closer affinity to human obstinacy than to divine veraciousness. Such a policy is as short-sighted as it is false and unkind, and there is no excuse for speciousness or unkindness to those whom Archbishop Whately calls "the to-morrow of Society." The boy will soon ask you why he is to dress and talk differently from other boys; and you can give the answer about "testimony," &c., or "leaving it in the hands of the Lord, who in due season will not fail to make a way for our help;"\*

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\* This expression in reference to dress actually occurs in one of J. J. Gurney's letters to a young Friend. It is not to be wondered at that Quakers acquire in after life such false notions of God as made the writer alluded to so constantly miserable, when they are thus taught in youth that the Deity attends to their personal attire.

There is nothing more remarkable than the *desire* of the Society of Friends to help young "convinced" persons, and assist their

and you must bear in mind that as your son progresses the Spirit may not vouchsafe to him the same apprehension as to yourself. But there is a period prior to this. If at the time when he is first subjected to the discipline of a distinctive apparel, the lad is a high-spirited one, he will fret under it; his natural simplicity will be distorted; his cheerfulness will be affected; and ten to one but he plays the hypocrite. If he has an hereditary allotment of Quaker "seriousness,"\* you do but more depress his moral and physical nature, and reduce it below the standard of healthful integrity. In another type of youthful mind this procedure will at once produce self-complacency, and spiritual self-pride. No one who knows anything of physiology or psychology—no one who knows anything of the reciprocity of action between body and mind—will gainsay this statement. Observe, too, the *selfishness* which this system inculcates; and how the subject of it is constantly led to think of *himself*, instead of others.

Parents who have any acquaintance with children, with those little human hearts, and the manifold infirmities

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tender consciences, as compared with the *means* which are adopted to render this important aid. Contrast, for instance, the enforcement of a grotesque costume, which your own knowledge of the human mind must teach you would be prejudicial to the health of many a moral nature, with the following excellent Rule: "For the sake of tender and young convinced Friends an earnest concern is on the minds of many, *that no occasion of stumbling or offence be laid in their way*; but that all such as have made longer profession with us may be careful to walk in all holiness, and uprightness of conversation, and in an humble waiting upon the Lord; that their example may tend to the encouragement and strengthening of those who have been more lately visited to a steady and constant perseverance, into the path into which the Lord hath directed their feet."—*Rules of Discipline*, 3rd Edition, 1834.

\* This is a favourite word with Quakers, significant of a very morbid religious condition. I cannot find it in the Bible.

which have been transmitted to them ; of the dangers of the scene on which they are called to play their part, will not hesitate to confirm this observation, whether they do or do not walk worthy of a Christian vocation. Why should you treat your child like this ? Why should you do violence to every feeling of his nature ? You do not know the cruel torture to which you are subjecting him, nor how you are undermining that equiposement of his compound being, which is more essential than anything else for the engraftment of a pure and healthy religion. You are fostering doubt and disquiet at the very commencement of his career, when all should be cheerfulness and peace. You are fencing about that young life with the difficulties at its very outset, from which he will never recover, when everything may depend upon a free and unfettered start. Are there not difficulties enough inseparable from our race, without creating unnecessary ones in the shape of unmeaning restrictions ? Are not our paths sufficiently steep and rugged ? Why, to send out your little one into the world, and tell him that the sacrifice of not dressing like other children is required of him as “ a testimony to the cause of truth,” is to instil into his mind the falsest morality ; and as he grows older he will be the first to find it out and tell you so : and then you will be doomed to experience what poor Mrs. Fry was subjected to, in the falling away one by one of her many children from the faith in which she had nurtured them. It is a certain fact, an indisputable truth, that no man can afford to expose his children to what Luther said was more likely to frighten the devil than anything else—laughter. If it can disconcert that obtrusive personality of evil—how much more a tender child !

It is marvellously strange to consider how differently two minds will view the same subject, both being equally

solicitous for the advancement of morality and truth. See what antagonistic opinions were advanced by two excellent individuals living in the same world, gifted with immortal souls, bound on the same journey, destined for the harvest or of glory or of shame. Joseph John Gurney writing about apparel observes: "It is worthy of remark that although an alteration in dress, and the substitution of 'thee and thou' for the plural pronouns, when addressed to an individual, appear to be sacrifices of little cost, there are few things which in tender minds occasion a greater struggle. As is the smallness of the required sacrifice, so appears to be the greatness of their fear to offer it. But is it not Satan, the father of all lies, who makes the path of duty, even in very little things, appear distressing and difficult? And would not the constraining love of Christ render every Cross to our own wills which we might undergo for His sake, both easy and pleasant?"\*

Sydney Smith writing on the same subject says: "Never teach false morality. How exquisitely absurd to teach a girl that beauty is of no value, dress of no use! Beauty is of value—her whole prospects and happiness in life may often depend upon a new gown or a becoming bonnet: if she has five grains of common sense she will find this out. *The great thing is to teach her their just value, and that there must be something better under the bonnet than a pretty face, for real happiness.*"†

Observe the extraordinary words which are introduced into the former quotation of nine lines and a half, merely upon the simple question as to whether one shall say "thee and thou," or dress different from his neighbours.

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\* *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends*, p. 440. London, 1834.

† *Life and Letters*, edited Lady Holland.

“Sacrifice,” “tender minds,” “struggles,” “Satan the Father of all lies,” “path of duty,” “distressing and difficult,” “constraining love of Christ,” “Cross to our own wills,” “for His sake.” But perhaps there are some minds for which this is proper treatment. “He that can receive it, let him receive it;” and God help us all, by giving us the “clothing of a right mind,” and by teaching us to “put on the Lord Jesus.”

And there is another very strong objection to a distinctive mode of costume. Not only is it injurious to the moral health of childhood and youth, by attaching means of recognition to one’s hatter or one’s tailor, rather than to an unvarying propriety of conduct; but it opens the door to a large importation of specious sanctity in adult life. I do not mean anything offensive to a Society which has numbered so many excellent men and women in its ranks, when I say, that there is a general feeling that however strictly moral Quakers may be, there is about them, as a class, a sad want of ingenuousness and manly straightforwardness. They are almost all alike, both as regards their vestments and their virtues. They have been cast in the same mould; and they betray none of that healthy individuality of character, which is essential to a high-class social condition. This would seem to be the inevitable result of a system of passivity and neutrality. It is so true as to have become a proverb, that you cannot extract from a Friend a direct answer to a plain question. He is afraid to commit himself to anything positive; and gives the preference to a negative or evasive reply.\* I have known

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\* “The nomenclature of this Society consists in a remarkable manner of qualified terms; so that speaking as well as dressing in *neutral tints*, would seem to be one of the elements of their social intercourse.” “Afraid of the evil without they have neglected to

individuals entertaining the highest respect for Friends, and believing them to be in weighty matters men of the most undeviating integrity, who have yet been oppressed with a conviction that in matters of lesser moment they are not equally trustworthy. And, as a body, they have been thought to be lamentably deficient in many things, by the best of their own community. Mrs. Fry observes: "I cannot deny that much as I love the principle [of Friends]—earnestly as I desire to uphold it, bitter experience has proved to me that Friends do rest too much on externals; and that valuable, indeed jewels of the first water, as are many amongst them, yet there are also serious evils in our Society, and amongst its members." And again: "I am certainly a thorough Friend, and have inexpressible unity with the principle, but I also see room for real improvement amongst us: may it take place. I want less love of money, less judging others, less tattling, less dependence upon external appearance."\*

The entertainment of the feeling to which I have alluded is by no means unnatural, when "the high professions" of Quakers are taken into consideration. Any one who has but a tolerably accurate knowledge of human nature

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provide against that within; and acting too much upon the *negative* system have taken it for granted that a condition of apparent emptiness and nothingness must necessarily be one of innocence, purity, and peace. The *positive* culture of all the human faculties, as the natural inheritance of man received from the hand of God, and the direction of such faculties into channels of healthy and wholesome exercise, even when they have no relation to the claims of trade or commerce, would seem in former times never to have constituted any portion of the philosophy of this otherwise shrewd and intelligent Society."—*Friends at their Firesides*, by Mrs. Ellis, pp. 3, 4, 6. London, 1858.

\* *Memoir of Life of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. ii., p. 109.

must be aware, that the constant introduction of a sanctimonious phraseology ; that perpetual allusions to details of domestic life, and personal apparel, as immediate revelations of the Divine will, and individual intimations of "a saving grace," are liable to bring even true religion into contempt, by exposing its most offensive and perverted type to mocking and ridicule.\* He must be sensible that these objectionable views and practices may become instrumental to the greatest mischief, in the hands of persons of weak minds, and strong emotional sensibilities. And if they add to this (I am speaking of women in particular), strong prejudices, little knowledge of character, and an overweening confidence in their own certificated authority† to visit families at their homes—what tools of mischief may they not become, what discord may they not create, what disquietude, instead of peace, may they not minister to unstable characters ! Then—what follows ? Some are driven from the Society. Bitter feelings are aroused ; and the fugitives from the Quaker fold resent their injuries by a highly coloured narrative of their wrongs, and the religious trivialities of those from whom they have but just separated. Such details of course find a ready acceptance with the public.

Some incident of this kind is the explanation of the appearance of two works, which have been published within the last few years, by a lady in Ireland, who was bound to

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\* "I believe and hope she means well," wrote Mrs. Montague of the Countess of Huntingdon ; "but she makes herself ridiculous to the profane, and dangerous to the good."

† Certain female members of the Society receive "certificates," at the monthly or quarterly meetings, authorising them to visit Friends at their own houses, and ply them with "ghostly counsel and advice."

the Society of Friends by the strongest hereditary ties, and who has made revelations of internal Quaker life, which, if true (as I believe they are, though they may be highly wrought pictures) are enough to upset any religious organization extant in which they may obtain. She avows that she has made no statement which is not strictly veracious, and that if Friends challenge her, she will publish a second edition, giving the names of the parties referred to. I am not aware that any answer has been made to this challenge; and as I know that some of the incidents recorded by the authoress of *The Story of my Life*, bear a striking analogy to some which have been personally communicated to myself, I make no hesitation in alluding to them.\*

\* The following refer to life, manners, and dress :—

“ One Friend, eulogizing a departed sister, said that she had honoured her Christian name; that she had always been such a consistent Friend, that she had never indulged her daughters in the vain fashions of the world—no, she had never even allowed them to wear silk gowns.”—*Quakerism, or the Story of my Life: by a Lady who for forty years was a member of the Society of Friends*, p. 113.

“ Then he prayed that the Lord would make her willing to give up the vain fashion of wearing curls, and plaiting her hair; and that He would teach her that these were not little things.”—*Ibid.*

“ Another time the overseers came to say that they had heard of our having a French master; that they knew it was not generally objected to by Friends, but they felt easier to warn us. There was great danger in it; it was insidious. Friends were tempted to say things in French they would not say in English—such as *Monsieur* and *Madame*. They did not wish to be officious, and they hoped we would not think them so; but their office was a very important one, and they were anxious to fulfil their duty faithfully.”—*Ibid.*, p. 126.

“ A young lady in her first attempt at preaching said :—A concern had long rested on her mind that Friends should walk close; that she was jealous for her dear sisters; that she wished they could see

If it be affirmed that the adoption of a particular dress can have had no injurious effect upon the Society of Friends, inasmuch as in Roman Catholic countries one sees everywhere the most grotesque-looking mortals, dressed in peculiar garbs which were assumed in early childhood; the reply is obvious—that the institutions of this country are essentially different from those of any Continental one. Religious orders, and distinctive ecclesiastical costumes,

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it right to wear plaits in their bonnets instead of gathers; that she hoped no one would think this a trifle; it was by trifles people fell; and that it was under a feeling of great weight, she was made willing to say these few words.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 32-3.

Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, and friend of Charles Lamb, was “put under dealing” for having the prefix of *Mr.* to his patronymic, over his office; and he was “visited and sat with,” we are told in his *Life*, for wearing a warm waistcoat which his only daughter had worked for him. He pleaded its warmth, and that the colours were only chocolate and drab; but in vain. “It was carpet-work, and therefore unbecoming for a member of our highly professing religious Society.”—*The Society of Friends*, by Mrs. J. R. Greer, author of *The Story of my Life*, vol. i., p. 152.

“With diffidence I propose the enquiry whether the walking arm-in-arm to the dinner-table, at a Quarterly Meeting, is not too near an approach to the fashions of a fleeting world? Does it not look a little too much like the selection of partners at a ball? With all due regard for true urbanity and Christian courtesy, I can see *no solid reason* for the practice referred to.”—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 218.

“To him the message was sent that the Lord had a controversy with him, for wearing heel-straps to his trousers; and unless he was faithful in surrendering to the requirement of the Spirit, and was prompt to put away so Babylonish an invention, he would have his portion with the unbelievers, and become a cast-away.”—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 164.

“To one she said: ‘He ought not to wear gloves on first-days; because as he was not in the habit of wearing them every day, it was going to meeting with a lie in his right hand.’”—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 165.

are recognized facts to all Catholic minds in all Catholic lands. These children are training for a profession; and the vestments are a part of the profession. They do not aspire to mix with the world and reap from it pecuniary advantages. Cropped heads, dirty skins, mean animal countenances, coarse clothing, all having their connexion with the Church, are as much an integral part of a Spanish or Italian constitution, as is liberty of conscience part of an English one. As every tenth man you meet in Paris is said to be a soldier, so every tenth man you meet in Naples is said to be an ecclesiastic. Which, by the way, is the most moral capital of the two? I am afraid the soldier of the sword will carry the day against the professed soldier of the Cross. In Naples, at least, the garb of the avowed follower of Christ does not secure a life moulded after the pattern of Christ. And, alas, I fear that this London of ours will tell but a sorry tale by the side of both; and that a modern divine has delineated with but too faithful a pen the "sins and sorrows" of another city, when he writes:—"They call the street in Jerusalem, along which tradition says that a bleeding Saviour bore his Cross, the *Via Dolorosa*; and I have thought that our own street (Princes Street, Edinburgh) was baptized in the sorrows of as mournful a name."\*

That which meets the gaze in every Italian town is of a different nature to that which appals one in our great London—It is not the slavery of a material vice, but the immaterial thralldom of mind and soul. Little children clothed in monastic garbs, with scarce a trace of anything but complete animalism about them; their heavy eyes sunken and wan; their strangely developed heads already

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\* *The City, Its Sins and Sorrows*, by Thos. Guthrie, D.D., p., 57.

bowed down by the weight of years; a bewildered look, which seems to say, 'whither are we going, and where does this degrading life lead to?' You may see this sort of thing to perfection in Rome on a great festival. I remember, one broiling day in June, standing in that great piazza, which is the wonder of the world, and the hope of all pilgrims, to see trooping by the pomp of the Imperial City, upon the Feast of Corpus Christi. And "God's representative on earth" was borne above the prostrate crowd, amid the clang of martial music, and the tramp of soldiers, and the idiotic gaze of candle-bearing monks, and the sad careworn look of that most unnatural of all monstrosities—childhood which has never known laughter, since it was baptized into this demented shame. And as Pius IX. passed in front of his great Cathedral, "proud of their trampled nature," fully did the mind realize what John Sterling said, when he beheld a similar spectacle:—"I have seen the Pope," he writes, "in all his pomp at St. Peter's; and he looked to me a mere lie in livery. How any man with clear head and honest heart, and capable of seeing realities, and distinguishing them from scenic falsehoods, should, after living in a Romanish country, and especially at Rome, be inclined to side with Leo against Luther, I cannot understand."\*

To look again at the question of "plainness of apparel." It is absurd to advocate uniformity of colour, and the entire absence of ornament, by a reference to a dispensation of temporal rewards and punishments, where Jewish women of a worldly character were stated to have specially called forth the Lord's indignation. It is not necessary to advocate extravagance in dress, nor superfluities in crinoline: they are to be condemned alike by

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\* *Life of John Sterling*, by Thomas Carlyle.

Scripture and by our own moral perceptions, though only (as it should seem) in a very limited measure by our present social code. But there is no occasion for absurd restrictions upon this point. He that feedeth the hungry, and clothes the naked; who "thinketh no evil," and doeth no sin; who is mindful of that verity which William Penn moulded into epigrammatic beauty—"the truest end of life is to find the life that never ends," need not consult the prophets, or Beau Brummel, as to his outward adornments.\* Yet Barclay and Joseph John Gurney quote the former as an authority for dress in the 19th century! See what the prophet says: "Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth neck and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet, therefore the Lord will smite

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\* "There is no harm in our wives and daughters having two or three silk gowns in wear at once, if our means permit it, though our great grandmothers might have been content with one for their lifetime. In the same way improvements in the elegant and imitative arts bring many things within the reach of the middle classes, which could not have been thought of, and could not once have been secured, by the higher. . . . If God 'gives a man power to get wealth' in this 19th century of ours, in which materials are cheapened, and, when beautifully wrought into various objects of use or ornament, come in these forms so within the reach of numbers as to be general and customary possessions—why, the man in question, however spiritual or devout he may be, need not be supposed to do wrong by availing himself of the advantages of the day he lives in. If he can keep a carriage—*let him keep it*; and let him *call* it a carriage, and not attempt to sophisticate his soul by describing it with the Quaker as only 'a leathern convenience.' The great thing is for the Christian to be able to justify himself to his own conscience and before God."—*Is it Possible to Make the Best of Both Worlds?* by Thomas Binney, pp. 121-2.

with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils," &c.\*

Is it implied by those who make use of this quotation as a weapon against modern dress, and as an exhortation to a Quaker garb, that women generally *do* "walk with stretched forth neck and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet?" Have they "nose-jewels, and wimples, and crisping pins"? And is it or is it not true that if one wanted to find "a scab on the crown of the head," he would go in quest of it to a poverty-stricken district, and to a half-starved family, or to where men are "clothed in fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day"? In a word, would he be more likely to discover it above the crinoline of Belgravia, or the tattered petticoat of Bethnal Green? Why, we may ask, are the lofty inspirations of the Jewish prophet thus ✱ prostituted to the childish imbecility of a modern sect?

It is true that St. Peter enjoins upon women as their best ornament "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price;" and St. Paul "a modest dress with good works." The former Apostle says that their adorning ought not to be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing gold;" and the latter commands

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\* *Isaiah*, ch. iii., v. 16-24.

them not to “adorn themselves with curled or braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” But the general opinion of Biblical critics (who are quite as obnoxious to visitations of the Spirit as the Society of Friends) is—that what is meant by these expressions is, rather the forbidding of that vanity which looks to outward adornment as the chief thing, to the neglect of the culture of that meek and quiet spirit, and that modesty of character, which may alike be developed under drab or purple. “The negation is not absolute,” says Burkitt, “but comparative. The Apostle does not absolutely forbid the wearing of ornaments or costly apparel by persons to whose state in life they are suitable ; but he forbids pride and vanity, affectation and ostentation in wearing them. As if he had said, God will have the hidden man of your heart adorned with grace, and delight more to see that than your bodies adorned with precious jewels and costly apparel.”

And it may be that if St. Paul could now descend amongst us, and take his walk in Hyde Park, instead of in the streets of Damascus, he might see there no little outward display, and (what at first might have the appearance of) much vanity. But he would at once discern beneath that veil the purity of maiden hearts, and the dignity of honoured matronhood. He would know that he could enlist ample services in the cause of Charity, in the cause of labours of love, in the cause of any development of Christian earnestness : and he would be content with that readiness and with that sacrifice, without reference to any distinctive peculiarity of garb. He would see the world, indeed, different from what it was when he left it 1800 years ago ; he would gladly recognize its intellectual, and social, and religious progress. He would do homage to the efforts which are everywhere being made to ameliorate

a population herded together under conditions and circumstances very different from anything which obtained in his day, and of which no man living at that remote period, and unendowed with prophetic vision, could have formed any conception. He would predicate the Crown for every Cross meckly borne and patiently endured: he would dwell on the spotless purity of those beauteous flowers which go to make up the true Christian life, as compared with (what have been well called) "the thistles of theological controversy;" and he would assuredly deprecate the constant attempt, which is so characteristic of some religions, to make smooth places rough, to put bitter for sweet, to hamper ourselves with voluntary chains and with unnecessary restrictions, which do not constitute wholesome discipline, nor lead the heaven-bound pilgrim nearer God. And if the Apostle wandered on through this modern Babylon, he might not find every picture presented to his gaze so morally healthful as the one we have just delineated. For he might turn aside into places where religion was *professed*, and where advertisements would invite him that "D. V." it was about to be *preached*. And would he not wonder what Christian love was doing, when he heard from various pulpits—as one may hear any Sunday in London—men ask a solemn blessing on their undertakings, and then vilify the religion of their neighbours with all the vehemence of unbridled maniacs! He might in a modern bear-garden see crowds of self-complacent men, and emotional females, paying so much a head to listen to the profane jocularities of a modern Boanerges.

One of the reasons assigned by Quakers for simplicity of apparel is, that much time is wasted and misemployed by undue attention to fashions, and the elaborations of personal attire. And there is much reason in the remark.

It takes an infinity of combing and cosmetics to get up the plumage of some birds, both young and old. "Plainness of apparel," says Joseph John Gurney, "has been adopted by the Society of Friends to prevent the undue engagement of time, but, chiefly, because ornament in dress is employed to gratify that personal vanity which, with every other modification of the pride of the human heart, Christians are forbidden to indulge, and enjoined to subdue."\*

Now, those who are most familiar with the customs and the domestic details of these singular eclectics affirm that they devote a great deal of time to the small niceties of costume.† Their personal attire certainly implies as much; and it is generally admitted that though they are not "clothed in purple," that the "fine linen" is not abandoned, and that the wealthier sort *do* "fare sumptuously every day." Their dresses are of the very best and most costly materials, different only from that of others in a peculiarity of shape, and in a rigid adherence to the varying shades of one neutral colour.‡ It has always appeared to me somewhat singular that, with their

\* *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices, &c.*, p. 431.

† Mr. Clarkson, who wrote fifty years ago, must be excepted. But he is a greater "Apologist" for Quakerism than ever Barclay was. He negatively approves of all Quaker habits, and almost endorses all Quaker doctrines.—Vide *Portraiture of Quakerism*, 3 vols.

‡ "They have never adopted any particular model, either in form or colour, for their clothes. They have regarded the two objects of decency and comfort: but they have allowed of various deviations consistent with these. They have, in fact, fluctuated in their dress."—*Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol. i., p. 283. This statement is not borne out by the modern experiences of those who are intimate with rigid Quakers. Gurney writes on this subject with as much

desire to adhere rigidly to Scripture models, *drab* should have been selected by Quakers in preference to one of the "primitive" colours. The shades of Tyrian dye form a striking feature in the attire of the personages who figure in both the Old and New Testaments. And I believe it may be affirmed that neither the Mother of God, nor her Adorable Son, are to be found represented in any picture by ancient masters (who are noted for singular truthfulness in the accessories of detail), clothed in other than the brightest colours.\* I have seen most of the Continental Galleries, and I cannot call to mind a single picture containing the Divine Personality, or the meek and gentle medium of His Incarnation, in which they do not both stand out upon the canvas as much by their brilliant vestments as by their superhuman aspect. How is this? What is the explanation of the fact? Is it not that even "He who did no sin" felt it to be his duty to fall in with the manners and customs of the age in which he trod this earth? He sate with others at meat; He drank wine; He wore blue, or purple, or crimson; He "rendered unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and

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earnestness and "deep feeling" as though he were engaged in the highest mysteries of his faith. He speaks of the "danger of despising 'the day of small things,'" in allusion to dress; and intimates that it is "a chain *graciously constructed by Divine Providence for important and desirable purposes.*" "Nothing," he again observes, "is insignificant which really appertains to the Divine Law; nor are there any parts of that law more important than those with which our sentiments respecting plainness are connected."

\* A modern Quakeress—a convert—confesses to a horror of drab. Her biographer says:—"Bright colours Mrs. Opie delighted in, and she had a sort of passion for prisms."—*Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, p. 334.

unto God the things which were God's." And we may be sure that He who knows all our weaknesses, and how much material help we require even in things spiritual, will never desire us to refuse those embellishments of physical life by which He has in His Providential care surrounded us. "With the experience of past ages before us, we may well learn to distrust every specious attempt to exaggerate morality, or to attach ideas of blame to things innocent or indifferent. This overdoing of virtue never fails to divert the mind from what is substantially good, and is, moreover, the almost invariable symptom of a transmuted or fictitious pietism."\*

The *general plainness* which embraces *apparel* embraces also *speech*. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon this point, when one considers the time that has been wasted by Christian controversialists in discussing the question of "Thee and Thou." It may suffice to remark, that it is another instance of obstructiveness to the conventionalisms of Society; another attempt to eliminate from Scripture, and confirm by the plea of grammatical accuracy, practices which do not require the assent or reproof of Holy Writ. That sacred volume was given us for a wiser purpose and for a nobler end. Neither the integrity of our principles, nor the excellence of our lives, are in any sense to be gauged by our adoption of an obsolete phraseology, or by our fondness for verbal eccentricities. We do not take our language, or our science, or our social customs, from the Bible. It is the Handbook only of our Religion, and ministers solely to the higher purposes of life.

It is singular that, as a matter of fact, Quakers are *not* remarkable for their *plainness*, and certainly not for their

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\* *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 198.

straightforwardness, of speech. Nothing is positive or definite. Everything is of a doubtful and negative character. Not that they desire to misstate, and say what is not true : but they are evasive ; so that *if* what they say should, unwittingly, prove to be not strictly correct, the looseness of their terms may screen them from the charge of a positively untruthful affirmation. They seem, in fact, to have a general mistrust of themselves ; which gives the character of redundancy and involution both to their written and oral phraseology. The following is a very singular instance of this, and is not the less remarkable as proceeding from a man who spent his life in bill-broking, and in amassing a princely fortune in the city of London. While at Cannes, on his journey homewards from Nice, Samuel Gurney, in dictating a letter to his brother in England, told his daughter to write : “ I am thankful to have got thus far on my journey ; but,” and he paused and meekly said, “ No ; don’t put that. It is so *much* to be thankful. Write it is cause for thankfulness ; that is much *safer*.”\* This seems but a feeble realization of the poet’s picture of augmenting spiritual, with declining physical, strength :—

“ The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
 Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.  
 Stronger by weakness wiser men become  
 As they draw near to their eternal home.”

All the letters and journals of Friends which I have

\* *Memorials of Samuel Gurney*, by Mrs. Thomas Geldart, p. 135. London, 1857.

The literature of the Society of Friends being at a low ebb is not to be marvelled at, when such a book as the above is given to the world.

met with are characterized by this singularly involuted and elaborate phraseology, which has but slight affinity to the ineuleated plainness of Quakers. It is not, 'I think so-and-so,' but, '*I am led to apprehend so-and-so.*' It is not, 'when we are in heaven,' but, '*when we are favoured to arrive at the heavenly shores.*' It is not, 'I hope I shall be able to make such a sacrifice,' but, '*I trust that I shall be made willing to see the desirableness of yielding to the requirements of truth; or, I have a concern that it will be laid upon me to make such a sacrifice to the requirements of truth.*' It is not, 'I am glad to say that I am very comfortable at Rotterdam, and I think I did right in coming,' but, '*Through tender mercy I was favoured to feel much rest, refreshment, and peace at Rotterdam, and much evidence that I was in my right place.*' (These specimens are authentic.)\*

But howsoever rigid may have once been the adoption of a neutral and sanetimonious phraseology; whatever austerity and plainness may have characterized internal Quaker economy; how ludicrous soever may have been the apparel of most "seriously convinced" Friends—it is certain that these absurdities are yielding to the mild

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\* The official phraseology of the Society is equally verbose and involuted. The following is the first paragraph of the 'certificate' granted to Mrs. Fry, on her Irish mission: "To Friends of the Nation of Ireland.—Dear Friends, our beloved friend Elizabeth Joseph Fry has in a weighty matter informed this meeting, that *her mind has been for many years impressed with a belief that it would be required of her to offer to pay a religious visit to the Meetings of Friends in Ireland, pretty generally; and also to stand resigned to further religious service, both among Friends and those not of the Society, as Truth might open the way; and that she apprehended the time was nearly come for her to enter thereon,*" &c. This is a curious specimen of plainness of speech!

sway of a healthy and enlightened progress.\* Some of the best Quakers are scarcely to be distinguished from other men by their dress, or by the general conduct of their domestic establishments. They keep their carriages, they are seen to move in public, they are less exclusive in their selection of companions, their houses are handsomely furnished, they are more tolerant of other creeds, they dwell less upon their favourite and fundamental doctrine of the immediate direction of the Spirit, and they altogether comport themselves in a manner more closely assimilating to that of Christians in general. The fears expressed by Joseph John Gurney; the strong opinions and the unqualified censures of Mrs. Fry, at the hollowness and hypocrisy of many within the fold; the falling away from the society of her own family, and of so many leading Friends—these facts have disgusted the self-complacent, disquieted the excellent, and relaxed the discipline of all. “How happy,” said Peter the Great, “must be a community instituted on Quaker principles!” “Beautiful!” said Frederic of Prussia, a hundred years later: “*It is perfect if it can last.*” Ah me! it has *not* lasted, and that—because of its *imperfection*.

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\* “It is, however, affirmed by some persons of credit, who are eye-witnesses of what passes among the members of this sect, that the modern, and more especially the English Quakers, whom trade has furnished with the means of luxury, have departed from this rigid and austere manner of life, and daily grown more reconciled to the outward pleasures and enjoyments of the world. These more sociable Quakers are also said to modify and explain the theology of their ancestors in such a manner as to render it more rational than it was in its primitive state. At the same time it is certain that many of the members of this sect have a false notion, or no notion at all, of that ancient theology.”—*Mösheim's Ecclesiastical History*, (Friends). New edit. by Dr. Maclaine. London, 1833.

This imperfection, I repeat, was fully recognized by that excellent philanthropist, who broke down the prison bars and unloosed the prison chains. Several of her opinions upon this subject have been recorded in a previous part of this Essay. But there are many others of a similar nature to be found in her *Memoir*. “—Evils which often make my heart mourn, and have led me earnestly to desire, that we might dwell less on externals, and more on the spiritual work; then I believe that we should be as a people less in bonds, and partake more of the glorious liberty of the children of God.”\* And again: “The affairs of our Society cause me real anxiety and pain, and reconcile me in measure to so many of my children leaving Friends.”† “I see no authority for supposing ourselves to be more of a chosen people, the select few, than all who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.”‡ Expressing her regret at her son J—— leaving the pale of the Society, because of her love for it, she adds: “Yet no outward names are in reality of much importance in my view, nor do I think much of membership with any outward sect or body of Christians—my feeling is that if we are but living members of the Church of Christ, this is the only membership essential to salvation.”§ Joseph John Gurney writes: “Alas! for the power of the world, the flesh, and the enemy! An increasing neglect of meetings is apparent in some of our members and attenders; and how can we expect it to be otherwise with those who refuse to take up their cross and follow Jesus? Some painful fears have also found their way to my heart lest a lurking infidelity should have

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\* *Memoir of Life of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. ii., p. 109.

† *Ibid.*, p. 204.   ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 247.   § *Ibid.*, p. 141.

insinuated itself into the bosoms of some of our juniors.”\* He says again: “The condition of that part of the Church of Christ, which is within the borders of “Quakerism,” is a cause, from time to time, of much humiliation and depression. Life is at a low ebb amongst us, I greatly fear; and the removal from the scene of warfare of so many promising young persons, seems, to our finite eye, almost to preclude the hope of revival.”†

How, indeed, should it be otherwise? With no standard of appeal, the Bible being even to some of the best of them a sealed book (see Gurney’s and Mrs. Fry’s *Life*); with minds wrought into the most frightful state of nervous sensibility by reason of an inability to realize, equably and serenely, the doctrine of the “Inward Light.” “A sealed book,” too, is it to the worst of them, for the same reason; hence “the lurking infidelity,” and the desertion, of the younger members.

The fact is, the Society of Friends has never recovered from the effects of that “desolating heresy”—the inevitable result, in minds of a certain class, of the doctrine of the “Inward Testimony of the Spirit”—which Isaac Crewdson speaks of as having swept thousands, in the United States of America, “into the gulf of Hicksism and Deism.” It is certain, from his own admissions, that even the excellent Joseph John Gurney was in a very embarrassing situation with respect to the Society, during the last twelve months of his life; and accusations of unorthodox views and writings were brought against him. All, in fact, seems tending to demonstrate the insecure position of that eclecticism which Barclay predicted should “grow to the consuming of whatever should stand up

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\* *Memoirs of J. J. Gurney*, vol. i., p. 368.      † *Ibid.*, p. 375.

to oppose it," and to indicate that in another half century not one stone shall be left upon another to tell its eventful tale.

4. *That it is not lawful to use Games, Sports, Plays, nor, among other things, Comedies, among Christians, under the notion of Recreations, which do not agree with Christian silence, gravity, and sobriety, &c.*

It will be observed that this proposition is based upon the assumption that a state of mind engendered by "silence and gravity" is salutary and desirable. Whereas, really, it is about the most morbid and unnatural state to which any young nature can be reduced. I have before dwelt upon the great importance of what is termed *cheerfulness*. It is the life spring of young minds. It is the exuberant gratitude of manhood to that God who "giveth all things richly to enjoy." It is the crown of old age, confident in the retrospective usefulness of a not mis-spent life, and hopeful in the prospective glories which are the heritage of the faithful. "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." A modern author speaking of a Swedish parson says: "He did not disdain secular recreations; his religion was cheerful and jubilant; he had found something else in the Bible than the lamentations of Jeremiah. There are so many Christians who—to judge from the expression of their faces—suffer under their belief, that it is a comfort to find those who see nothing heretical in the fullest and freest enjoyment of life."\* And Sydney Smith says: "I thank God who has made me poor that he has me merry." Cheerfulness of some

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\* *Northern Travel*, by Bayard Taylor, London, 1858.

sort is absolutely essential to perfect moral health, and therefore to the correct engraftment upon it of the highest Christian excellence. And I will take this opportunity of expressing my belief, that very much of that morbid "seriousness" so characteristic of the Society of Friends, arises from the effort which is made at too early a period to impress the mind of childhood with ideas of the "great awfulness" of God, and of the "terrors of the Lord." It is not presenting the most beautiful feature of the Gospel Revelation to the most beautiful emanation from the Divine essence—a young and spotless child. It is not appealing to the highest part of that wonderful life which is to know no ending ; but rather to its very worst feelings. It is appealing, in fact, to fears and terrors, instead of to hope, and affection, and love. It is overweighting the cheerful elasticity of youth, and ignoring the poet's dictum, that

" Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth  
Are children of one Mother."

Let us look at the thing in a more simple and familiar way. Supposing you send your boy to school, and he writes home to you and says that he is happy ; that his schoolmaster is so kind, and quite idolized by all the boys ; that he (the master) has such a happy way of putting everything before them that they cannot help learning it, if only to please *him* ; that all the subordinates are of the same character,—that, in fact, he likes school quite as well as home. Or if you are fortunate enough to hit upon a modified "Dotheboys Hall," and the dear little fellow, whose tearful face at parting you cannot get out of your mind, writes you, that the master is very harsh and severe, that he flogged two boys yesterday, that he gave "a hundred lines each" to six others, that every one is dreadfully afraid of him, and that Johnny is in a

terrible fright lest *his* turn may come to-morrow. Now which of these two systems (and they are the extremes of latitude between which are endless degrees) is most likely to develope your child into an honest, loving, open, generous, manly fellow?—which into a timid, nervous, dejected, youth, or else into a violent, resentful, and bullying man? The first school I was ever at was kept by a fiend—not by a man. I have seen him day after day, for the mere sake of enjoying their animal sufferings, flog six poor little devils in leather breeches who had the ill-fortune to be on the charitable foundation. (O Charity, how is thy name misused, and how are thy purposes perverted!) Such an one must have spun cockchafers on a pin when a boy himself, and crunched bluebottles with tremendous zeal. Yet he now wears the mantle of the Apostles, and has received the hereditary mandate, “Go teach all nations.” I knew one whose young nature drooped under that terrible system: I know others who were so cowed and trampled by it that they did not rally from its effects for years; and I believe that the finest feelings of my own nature have never recovered from the real cruelties which I there saw enacted. Yet this fiend passed for a Saint, and now he has become an Apostle.

“Who hath not seen dissimulation reign—  
The prayers of Abel linked to deeds of Cain?”

But, with the best and purest intentions, and with the most anxious solicitude for their children’s spiritual welfare, Quaker parents have such a thorough ignorance of human nature, and such terrible misapprehensions of Divine Love, that there is very much analogy between the latter of the two systems which I have mentioned, and the primary notions which they instil into the youngest and most simple minds. And if these minds are naturally of a nervous kind, what peculiar judgment and discrimination

do they not require in their educational treatment ! Such as the following picture reveals, for instance : “ I do not look back ” ( writes J. J. Gurney, autobiographically recalling his own impressions of his early life )—“ I do not look back upon my childhood with much comfort or satisfaction. . . . I was a very fearful nervous child, not, I believe, fractious in temper, nor by any means destitute of a relish for enjoyment, but acutely alive to suffering of mind. Often in the night I was overtaken by an indescribable nervous agitation, as if the very walls were falling down upon me to crush me ; and many a time did I spring from my bed and seek refuge with some kind friend or sister, particularly my sister Elizabeth, who well understood me, and never failed, as occasion required, to pity and protect me.”\* It is fair to state that Gurney’s own first religious impressions were of Love and Mercy, though I have previously shown under what awful fears and morbid apprehensions he subsequently laboured. His daughter, however, who died young, has recorded *her* religious initiations : “ We were very little children when he ( my Father ) began occasionally to take us into his study, for times of religious retirement and prayer. After sitting a short time in silence, he would often kneel down, and pour forth his prayers in the most simple words he could use. I think I never shall forget the very great solemnity ; the holy, and to me, as a little child, *the almost awful feeling* of some of these occasions.”† It *must* be bad ( or what we know of mental science is a falsehood ) for *any* young person to be subjected to this sort of treatment. It is the first fatal step towards turning the green pastures of life into “ burning sands and bitter waters.”

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\* *Memoirs of J. J. Gurney*, vol. i., p. 11.

† *Recollections of J. J. Gurney*, by his Daughter. Appendix to *Memoirs*, vol. ii., p. 522.

Mrs. Fry says : “ My remembrance is of the pleasure of my childhood being almost spoiled through fear, and my religious impressions, such as I had, were accompanied by gloom : *on this account I think the utmost care needed in representing religious truth to children, that fearful views of it should be most carefully avoided, lest it should give a distaste for that which is most precious. First show them the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus.*” \*

The consideration of this initiatory period leads us naturally into youth and manhood, with their attendant sports, amusements, and games. In the early years of Quakerism every kind of diversion was interdicted, and even education was interrupted, if the subject of it was so “ seriously convinced ” as to believe that he ought entirely to surrender himself to the exclusive service of the Spirit.” †

It is not so now. “ Ancient principles ” are not retained.

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\* *Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. i., p. 10.

† “ This (a sermon of George Fox’s on Non-conformity to Customary Salutations, and on the Doctrine of the Inward Light) so reached W. Caton that in due time he began to be subject to this inward convincement, by which he came to be much restrained in his carriage, and could not allow himself so great liberty as he was wont to do ; for though he was noways extravagant, yet now he saw that a true Christian must be weaned from all Vanity, and that the common diversions of youth displeased God. . . . He had not yet left the school ; but (though he was pretty much advanced in his learning) the making of Latin verses became a burthen to him, because he could not give his thoughts that liberty for invention as others did ; neither could he well any longer give to the master of the school the compliment of the hat, as he was used to do : This I had from his own mouth. One may easily guess that hereby he was brought into a strait : but Margaret Fell [a widow who was subsequently married to Fox] seeing that he longed to be freed from the school, caused him to stay at home, when he was employed by her in writing, and teaching her own children.”—*Sewel’s History of the Quakers*, p. 101.

It is more recognized than it was, that it is hurtful to the moral and physical health of children to deprive them of youthful games. But young Friends are so subdued by their efforts to realize the immediate and personal evidence of the Spirit, that it seems unnatural to them to turn from the contemplation of such an "awful" doctrine, to a game at cricket or leap-frog. Hence you do not see at Quaker schools that same hilariousness, and entire freedom from care, which constitute the chief feature of youthful happiness. The religion which they inherit is an abstract one: it is a "meditative insulation;" it is a selfish and centric introversion, which unfits for contact with the world, and converts them into unnaturally grave and "serious" men before they have assumed the toga virilis.

The rule by which Quakers have generally been guided, has been by that of educating their children according to primitive notions. It is the old story of going to the Bible for life, and manners, and general information, as adapted to the 19th century. "As a Christian Society they conceive themselves bound to be guided by revelation only, while it has any injunctions to offer which relate to this subject." And they refer both to the Old and New Testaments, as containing chiefly prohibitory doctrines. This system has been very fatal to progress, and has prevented Quakers reaching a standard which has been usually attained by other religious communities. The prohibition, for instance, of music, and a repudiation of the desirableness of cultivating that heaven-born gift, must seriously affect many natures endowed with an innate perception of the harmony of sound. They would not have been so gifted but for wise and beneficent purposes; and to thwart the development of such faculties is to obstruct the designs of an All-wise and All-bountiful Creator. Besides, all the analogies of Nature forbid us to

do violence to the taste for music, by refusing its cultivation. Who so musical as that divine mistress? Nature, indeed, is only another name for harmony. All her pulsations are rhythmical. "Harmony is the very being of God, and the operation of his laws." It has been well said that there is no Quakerism in Nature. It is an old saying, but a true one, and none the less so because of the tendency of the opinions of the man who uttered it. O no! God has so beautified this earth with sights and sounds, that they smile upon us and greet us everywhere. He has enriched the lap of Nature with varied colours and perfumes. Even that bow which He hath set in the clouds contains all colours, and is, without exception, the most beautiful natural phenomenon. It is a prismatic revelation upon which is ingrafted all our knowledge of Beauty. And yet (such is the spirit of opposition in some natures and societies) Friends affecting a love for "primitiveness," reject the "primitive colours," and give a preference to drab! As if a rainbow or a peacock were not more lovely to look at than a Quaker! Nor is Nature less varied in her sounds. She is neither mute nor unvarying in her testimony. Every sigh she breathes is full of harmony. There is music in the rain as it patters upon the leaves; in the song of birds; in the waves as they die upon the shore. There is music in the wind as it whistles through the shrouds; as it bends the forest trees budding into their spring-time foliage, or in the full glory of their summer green, or in that sere and yellow clothing which is the herald of decay. And is there to be nothing of a higher form grafted upon these divine melodies, which will hereafter constitute the music of the heavenly spheres? Have we no thoughts of such things as these beyond the grave—of the tuning of many harps, and the voices of redeemed men and angels singing,

“Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth”? And shall David, who has left us his undying *Songs*; and Haydn, who has shaped out for us another “*Creation*,” and Handel, who has bequeathed to us a second “*Messiah*”—have no higher appreciation of seraphic strains, than the Quaker, who forbids the cultivation of music *because* many men have abused it?\*

“That there is a tendency in music (says a great musical authority) to excite grave, and even devout, as well as lively and mirthful, affections, no one can doubt who is not an absolute stranger to its efficacy; and though it may perhaps be said that the effects of music are mechanical, and that there can be nothing pleasing to God in that devotion which follows the involuntary operation of sound on the human mind; this is more than can be proved, and the Scripture seems to indicate the contrary.”† It is satisfactory to know that music is another of those accom-

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\* The reasons assigned by Quakers for repudiating the cultivation of music, show more than anything else how thoroughly the artificial system to which they are enslaved is at variance with the beautiful and sympathetic influences of Nature. They say that “envy and vainglory are often excited in its pursuit,” that it does not “tend to promote the improvement of the mind; that though it may “yield soft influences, it cannot yield morality;” it may do to soften savages, but a Christian community can admit of no better civilization *than that which the Spirit of the Supreme Being can produce.*” “It does not produce elevated thoughts,” nor “any solid enjoyment.” It interferes with “silent worship;” it is “a sensual occupation,” and is opposed to “spiritual feelings.” Lastly, “in the course of the long education necessary for this science the *different disorders of Hysteria* are produced.—(*Clarkson’s Portraiture*, vol. i., pp. 45-50.) The morbid state called Hysteria is what I have previously pointed out as one of the great dangers of the Quaker creed. The scent of assafoetida is almost confined to the shops of druggists, and the houses of “seriously religious” persons.

† *History of Music*, by Sir John Hawkins, vol. iv., p. 42.

plishments with which Quakers are not now ashamed to embellish life. They are recognizing—too late indeed for the propping up of their doomed Society, though not too late for additional individual enjoyment—the healthfulness of a more extended sympathy with natural gifts and endowments; of a more generous appreciation of the value of material comforts; and of the moral importance to themselves of that wholesome discipline which cannot be experienced under a system of perpetual prohibitions.

These arguments are applicable to most of the other amusements and trivial occupations which have at times received the interdiction of the Society of Friends. Dancing, which is nothing more, when kept within legitimate bounds, than the attudinizing the body into graceful shapes, may be instrumental to physical health in young persons, and is none the less acceptable because it seems to require the aid of music. It *need* not be (what William Penn said it was) “the Devil’s procession” to any well-regulated person; and it *may* so minister to the inherent sense of the beautiful, as to minister again to the not so inherent sense of the good: and thus one may be led higher and higher in the scale of being, through its feeble instrumentality. There are some persons (of a truth I do not envy them) who can hardly live without dancing: and if they are none the better for it, certainly they are not, of necessity, the worse for it. Again, there is in some persons an innate sense of impropriety in dancing; and such persons are quite right to abstain from it on that very account. The acting up strictly to this moral sense constitutes the very discipline which eventuates in individual excellence. But to abstain from an amusement simply because it has been interdicted by men who are conscious of its having been abused, without

any reference to the intuitive perception of a single personality in respect of it, is to play the coward, to shrink from responsibility, and to evade that which may be made, by reason of its danger, the medium of healthful discipline. Every one knows that dancing is mentioned frequently in Scripture, in connexion with music. Every one who believes that the Heaven which awaits us beyond the grave will be a *place*, and not a *state of being*, is conscious that we shall not there be idle nor engaged in passive contemplation; but that joined hand in hand, and heart to heart, with those who were our solace here, we shall for ever do homage with our spiritual bodies, and our spiritual faculties, to "Him that sitteth on the throne." What form that homage will assume we cannot tell. But it is neither unnatural nor unreasonable to believe, that nothing will be wanting which can lend grace and beauty to perfect adoration—that we shall never grow weary of angelic dances, nor become surfeited with the music of celestial strains.

By many Christians cards and all games of chance have been interdicted, because they have been so notoriously associated with every form of vice and profligacy. This is not to be wondered at. It should be observed that there is nothing natural in the cultivation of these pursuits: they are purely of an artificial character, and a taste for them is often acquired at the cost of much time and labour. It is certain that a well-regulated mind ought to be able to do without such adventitious helps; but it is equally certain that no well-regulated mind *need* be any the worse for them. It is the fault of the individual, and not of the game, if any harm ensues from its occasional practice, as a recreation, after, perhaps, some severe physical or mental labour. Upon the prohibitory principle of Quakerism, it would be as desirable to relin-

quish all attempts to propagate Christianity, because many who have embraced the faith have afterwards become apostates, and perverted its sublime verities to their own destruction, as to banish all those sports and amusements the judicious indulgence in which is largely instrumental to physical, moral, and religious health; but the injudicious pursuit of which has filled the world with misery and sin. Of one thing I am quite certain: that any man who has the moral courage to become a Quaker, from real conscientious motives, has the moral courage to resist temptation, be it presented in what form of allurements it may; he need not therefore have become a Quaker. But I am by no means so sure that every man who has grace and power to resist all temptation has the moral courage to put on the straight collar or the broad-brimmed hat. Neither, therefore, need *he* become a Quaker.\*

Moderate indulgence in the sports of the field is recognized by most men as not necessarily incompatible with every form of active Christian virtue, and with the most saintly aspirations of Christian excellence. There is many

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\* There is one indulgence forbidden by Quakers which a youth *cannot help being the worse for*. Novel-reading is the most pernicious habit of modern times. A highly-wrought fiction may lay the foundation of incalculable mischief. It leaves behind it an unnaturally excited mental condition, which is followed by depression. Then there is another three-volumed stimulant required, or something worse; and so the seeds are laid for all sorts of bad habits, and perverted sensibilities. Highly-wrought dramas may also be very injurious to young persons: but there is many a well-regulated mind which can derive real pleasure and instruction from the stage, and make it minister to the best instead of the worst part of his nature. Coleridge, by the way, says:—"Our earliest dramatic performances were religious, founded chiefly upon Scripture History."—(*Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton*, edited by J. P. Collier, Esq., p. 26.)

a one who would derive a larger sense of God's goodness, and of his dealings with us, from a ride across country with Mr. Kingsley, than from sitting under the depressing and degrading influence of a Calvinistic sermon.\* One walk in "My Winter Garden"† would show me more of natural, and tell me more truth of revealed, religion, than any number of visits to the Surrey *Theological* Gardens. We cannot always be thinking about religion as an insular abstraction; but we may always so act as to make every natural object and every natural pleasure minister to our own edification: and so the entire Christian life may become a many-coloured but harmonious testimony to that God, who puts it into hearts to desire—not that we may be taken *out* of the world, but that we may mercifully be preserved from its evil. Our great Wordsworth says, in language to which millions respond:

"She (Nature) has a world of ready wealth  
 Our minds and hearts to bless—  
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.  
 One impulse from a vernal wood  
 May teach you more of man,  
 Of moral evil and of good,  
 Than all the sages can."

Nor have the interdictions placed upon certain trades

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\* I heard a sermon preached last year by a young man, on the text: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It was calculated to do as much mischief to some minds, and to make all ignorant persons as miserable as anything which can possibly be conceived. The preacher knew no more of life, or human nature, or of "God's ways to man," than the most ignorant fanatic of Fox's time; and if all I heard him say is *Truth*, men had better renounce Christianity to-morrow.

† See an admirable article bearing this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for last year.

increased the numerical force of the Society of Friends. You cannot make the community believe that a goldsmith or a jeweller may not have as good a chance of going to heaven as the corn-dealer, or the vendor of elaborate brims. Nor can those who are without the pale of Quakerism reconcile the consistency of these prohibitions with the fact, that princely fortunes have been amassed by Quakers in the Bank and in the Brewery. If it is wrong to sell a brooch\* because it is a pampering to that vanity which lies in outward adornment, it is surely equally wrong to deal in money, which is said to be the "root of all evil," and in fermented liquors, which are so productive of mischief among certain classes in this country. One deeply mixed up in commercial pursuits and speculation has fairly acknowledged this danger, at the same time striving to reconcile his position to "the call of duty." "As for myself," writes Samuel Gurney, the eminent bill-broker, to his brother, "I may fairly acknowledge I have been too much occupied in my worldly pursuits, and, what is worse, *I do not at present see my way clear out of them.* I mourn over this at times, but *perhaps there is a ground for hope that relief may come.* A Lombard-street business, *especially our own, is so very engrossing*, and does in reality require such unremitting attention that escape is not easy. I sometimes feel inclined to envy some of you in the devotion or calling of your lives, with all its trials and baptisms. *I can only salve over my own mind* with the thought that my worldly engrossments have not been entirely my own choosing—

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\* "If a Quaker confine himself to the selling of plain silver articles for use, little objection can be raised against his employ. But if in addition to this he sell *gold-headed canes*, trinkets, rings, ear-rings, bracelets, jewels, and other ornaments of the person, he will be considered chargeable with inconsistency."—*Clarkson's Portraiture*, &c., vol. ii., p. 67.

*have come upon me unsought, and may be for the present my calling.*"\*

What would George Fox have said to this? Would he not again be (to use his own words) "almost in despair, and in mighty trouble," if he could read the "*Memorials*" of a modern disciple recently gone to his rest? Whilst we, who witness the sensible and consistent careers of some of the best of modern Friends, are happily convinced that they are day by day more relinquishing the system of prohibitions, and learning to realize the good Dean Sherlock's statement, that happiness and prosperity on earth are compatible with salvation in heaven. "Excepting the case of persecution," he says, "a good man may be very rich and honourable, and enjoy all the delights and pleasures of this life, as much as it becomes a man to enjoy them. For the world was made to be enjoyed; and a good man who observes the rules of virtue, may enjoy this world as far as God made it to be enjoyed; and therefore may be as happy as this world was intended to make him. Which is very fit to be observed, to prevent any unreasonable prejudices against the laws of our Saviour, as if we could not save our souls without renouncing all the ease and pleasures, and comforts of this life; whereas in ordinary cases we may enjoy all the happiness this world was made for, and all the happiness which we were made to enjoy in this world, and go to heaven when we die."†

I propose to allude very briefly to the subject of *Tithes* and other Ecclesiastical imposts, not because Quakers have been more anxious to rid themselves of such burdens than several other Christian sects; but because they have, while

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\* *Memorials of Samuel Gurney*, p. 44.

† *Of the Immortality of the Soul*, p. 574.

professing a higher principle, and more Spiritual guidance, earned for themselves the character of singular obstinacy, and pertinacious obstructiveness: Friends do not admit that the fact of their buying landed property burdened with the legal impost of tithes lays them under any moral, or social, or religious obligation to pay those tithes; although the price of the property has probably been regulated by the extent of its ecclesiastical burden.\* “This conclusion” (of the necessity of the resistance of *the voluntary payment* of tithes), says J. J. Gurney, “is by no means affected by the consideration that the payment of tithes is imposed on the inhabitants of this country by the law of the land; and that, therefore, the clergy have a legal claim to such remuneration. Faithful as Friends desire to be to the legal authorities of the State under which they live, it is plain that as Christians they cannot render to the law an *active* obedience, in any particular which interferes with their religious duty—that is to say with their duty to an infinitely superior power.”†

It is well to note the distinction which is drawn between *active* and *passive* obedience. ‘Ecclesiastical imposts are unchristian,’ they say, ‘and not warranted by Scripture: *therefore* we shall not pay your demands, although, according to the laws of the land, they are legal: but if you enforce payment in the case of tithes by taking away our property *in kind*, or, as in the case of Church-rates, by a

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\* “*Against compromise.* With respect to a proposal about taking a farm and agreeing to pay so much the more to be exempt from tithes; it is left to the several monthly and quarterly meetings to advise Friends to be careful that nothing be done that tends to weaken our Testimony against Tithes by any, and that such be admonished as they see cause. 1696.” *Rules of Discipline*, p. 262, 3rd edition, 1834.

† *Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends*, p. 251.

detractment upon our goods and chattels, we have nothing to reply to that. *Resistance* is as unchristian as the tithe: *therefore* we shall *passively* submit to the adoption of those measures which the Legislature sanctions.' And now comes the nice point upon which Quaker principles have been so often shipwrecked. It is strictly forbidden by the Society's Rules of Discipline, under pain of being "visited, dealt with, and disowned," that any member should attempt to effect a compromise with the engines of the law. That is to say, if the seizure is *in kind*, and a pig is borne away to satisfy the ruthless demands of the collectors, you are to let the pig go, and be sold; and you are to receive back from the collectors, with the meekness of a martyr, the difference between his demand upon you, and his realization from this abomination of Israel.\* Now this is a very hard case, and a very cruel and unnecessary exaction. And that the majority of Friends, not of the stern and rigid school, have felt it to be so, is evident from the fact of these very reasonable compromises being effected with great and increasing frequency. So much so indeed that in 1750 Friends are further exhorted in the *Rules of Discipline* against "unfaithfulness or collusion: a disposition altogether unbecoming the nobility of Truth, and inconsistent with the uprightness it requires."†

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\* "*Against collusion.* Advised that our ancient Christian Testimony against Tithes be not avoided or shunned, by any indirect ways or causes, with landlords or otherwise; and that Friends be careful to keep a true record of the value of what has been taken from them on that account, in the field or otherwise, whether it exceed the demand or not, with the respective date of each suffering, and the time when any suit is commenced. 1698." *Rules of Discipline*, p. 262.

† *Rules of Discipline*, p. 264.

In 1796 the threats of "Disownment" were multiplied against the augmenting band of "irreclaimable delinquents."\* In 1848 the practice of buying back goods distrained was so palpable, as to lead to a still further enactment: "This meeting is of the judgment that the purchase by Friends of goods distrained to satisfy ecclesiastical or military demands, is a practice opposed to the faithful upholding of our Testimony against the payment of such claims."†

The writer has personal knowledge of many transactions of this character; and he particularly calls to mind the case of an Alderney cow belonging to a wealthy Quaker in —, which was offered up every year as a very temporary sacrifice to the cause of Truth. The poor quadruped was led off the premises as a *meek* "testimony to ancient principles," but always returned after one night's absence from its wonted pastures, in *triumphant* "testimony" to man's affection for a dumb and useful animal. The compromiser was the leading Friend of the Society in the town alluded to, and, therefore, "Disownment" was not thought necessary or desirable. But it is acknowledged by Quakers themselves, that this question of compromise has been a very fertile cause of dismemberment.‡ How little notion

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\* *Rules of Discipline*, p. 265.

† *Supplement to Rules of Discipline, with "Advices,"* p. 402.

‡ It would appear from the following that the tithe-collectors connive at these compromises: "In my English Quaker experience I have told how the 'Testimony' is sometimes managed there. The Irish Friends are quite as clever in a different way. Thus, a sack of wheat was once placed in a very conspicuous place in a barn, when it was known the Tithe-collectors were coming. The owner *stood by* and said to them. 'Look at that sack of wheat; I would not for £5. 7s. 6d. (the sum demanded) lose that.' The men immediately lifted it up on the car they had brought with them, and

have these rigid disciplinarians who drive the sheep from the fold with so much indifference, of the benignant features of the great Christian scheme : how small is their perception of (what Mrs. Fry beautifully called) “ the unutterable largeness of the real foundation ” !

*5. That it is not lawful for Christians to swear at all under the Gospel, not only not vainly, nor in their common discourse, which was also forbidden under the Mosaical law, but even not in judgment before the Magistrate.*

There can be no doubt, I suppose, that in a perfect state of Christian Society, not only would there be no vain swearing, but there would be no civil oaths required for the protection of truth and justice, which all men would be equally solicitous to revere and shelter. And if the perfection of modern Society is to be gauged by our freedom from either the vain or the civil swearing, it is to be feared that we are in a very lamentable and unprogres-

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drove off, a little beyond the end of the avenue : they then turned again. The Quaker had not moved from the spot he stood in. They said, ‘ Sir, will you buy a fine sack of wheat from us ? ’ ‘ What is the price ? let me look at it. ’ He opened the sack, rubbed the grain in his hand and said it was very prime. ‘ Come, Sir, be quick. Will you buy it for £5. 7s. 6d ? ’ ‘ Yes, ’ he replied, ‘ I will, ’ and drew the amount out of his pocket. The sack was restored to its proper place. The Collectors received an extra shilling, with which to drink the Friend’s health, and very likely to laugh heartily at that curious anomaly a Quaker’s conscience. A gentleman who has now left the Friends, and joined the Church of England and Ireland, told me that when he was a Quaker his plan of evading the payments and supporting the Testimony, was to leave, as if by chance, cartridges of half-pence rolled up in paper, to a larger amount than the sum demanded, in a conspicuous place. The Collectors would only take the right sum, and the Testimony was upheld most satisfactorily.”—*Story of my Life, &c.*, pp. 369, 370.

sive condition. We have only to deal with the question of civil oaths: and it must be allowed at once, that many of our charters and venerable institutions are fettered and manacled by the most unnecessary restrictions of this character. Men are called upon to swear in the most solemn manner, upon occasions when it would be manifestly to the swearer's own disadvantage to do that which he calls Heaven to witness he will not do. And again, men are called upon to make solemn oaths, in compliance with an ancient statute, either that they will not adopt a custom which has long been obsolete, or that they will not do some particular trivial act which the conventionalisms of our modern social state immediately force them to do.\* Upon these very absurd and very unwarrantable abuses, Quakers have founded their repudiation of all juratory forms. And it is curious to note that upon *abuses* of various gifts, and endowments, and privileges, has the Society of Friends built all its objections to the proper and legitimate *use* of the same—these objections being supported (as the majority of Christians opine), either by forced interpretations of Scripture, or by a very unwarrantable misapplication of Holy writ.

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\* Mr. Buckle has touched upon this subject very ably, in his *History of Civilization in England*.

“In England, even the boy at College is forced to swear about matters which he cannot understand, and which far riper minds are unable to master. If he afterwards goes into Parliament he must again swear about his religion; and at nearly every stage of political life, he must take fresh oaths; the solemnity of which is often strangely contrasted with the trivial functions to which they are the prelude. A solemn adjuration of the Deity being thus made at every turn, it has happened, as might have been expected, that oaths, enjoined as a matter of course, have at length degenerated into a matter of form.”—p. 259.

What we have really to enquire is this: Does Truth derive absolute support from the civil administration of oaths? and were oaths recognised institutions of both the Jewish and Christian Dispensations? Upon both points, of course, there is a difference of opinion.

The sagacious Barclay thinks to dispose of the subject by saying that "Truth was before oaths." But it may be observed that fingers were before forks: and no one will deny that the former are very materially protected by the latter. In the same way a large proportion of Christians, who are quite as anxious for the preservation of Truth as the Society of Friends, believe that Truth derives very great protection from the administration of Oaths. For the purposes of this protection, the constitution of the country requires (under certain exceptions) that every person giving evidence in a court of law, or before a magistrate, shall call Heaven to witness that he will speak veraciously. The effect of this upon uneducated minds is very solemn and very wholesome, and is a moral shield to Truth. If we were all perfect, or all equally educated, and impressed with the importance of Truth, this shield would not be required. We have to deal, however, with the world as it is, and not as it might be. When it is as it might be, we shall have attained that perfection of Truth, which will furnish an answer to Pilate's question, and solve for ever the "riddle of history."

The influence produced upon uneducated minds, unfamiliar with courts of law and justice, by the solemn administration of an oath, is very analogous to that effected by strains of solemn music, and by the sombre beauties of a gothic pile, upon the religious aspirations of the soul. Few minds are really insensible to accessories of this kind, although there are some frigid natures (not, I think, to be envied) which repudiate every

assistance not strictly of a centric character. These latter profess, and openly avow, that it is the easiest thing in the world to worship and to realize the Almighty, though they admit that "God is a Spirit," and that they themselves are men. But look into the daily records of their daily struggles, and see what a terrible mess even the best of these men make of "Religious Feeling."

In the year 1696, an Act was passed which enabled Quakers to make a solemn affirmation, when called upon to give evidence; and other immunities and privileges were ceded to them by the same statute. Considering their own early intolerance, they have enjoyed, since the first few years of fiery persecution, particular freedom from civil and religious restrictions. Their conscientious scruples have been entirely respected; yet at the same time those scruples have been associated, in the general mind of the community, with a vivid sense of Quaker obstinacy.

Assuming it to be clear to general apprehension, that Truth may derive real protection from some kind of juratory form; and seeing that the Scriptural evidence admits of two interpretations, it is not unreasonable to believe that to be the most legitimate construction of the Divine precepts, which lends sanction to the lawfulness of oaths. Scripture admits of this adaptation to time, to circumstance, to social requirements, and national idiosyncrasies. Now Biblical critics (and it must be borne in mind that they were equally obnoxious, with Friends, to the influence of the Holy Spirit at the time they made their criticisms) are of opinion, that the passage in St. Matthew—"Swear not at all," &c., delivered by our Saviour Himself, was merely intended as a reproof to the Jews, for their constant invocation of the Deity upon slight occasions. "Although the command seems general and absolute, we must nevertheless understand it

with some restriction.”\* “It is plain,” says another critic,† “that if the prohibition ‘swear not at all’ were understood absolutely, the good of society would be much affected, as, in important matters, there would be wanting the strongest human assurance, and the best human testimony, which derive their greatest force from a solemn appeal to God; and therefore our Lord restrains his command to ordinary discourse,‡ and opposes it to the unnecessary and ensnaring oaths and vows, then so frequent among the Jews.” And Bishop Mann says: “Your common discourse must be free from oaths of any kind, for oaths are only to be used when they are required by lawful authority. Of the passage in St. James—‘But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath,’ &c. (Ch. v. 12) a noted Biblical critic§ observes: ‘And let me particularly warn you that no examples, no provocations whatever, draw you into the vice of common swearing, and invoking the name of God on light and needless occasions.’ And Dr. Jortin remarks on the same passage: ‘In later times some sects of Christians have totally condemned all oaths as unlawful. But in this they have carried their scruples too far. And this is one of the inconveniences which will always arise, when religious but injudicious persons lay hold on single texts of Scripture, and undertake to interpret them, without comparing them with other passages, and calling in the light of reason and natural sense to their aid. That oaths are

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\* *Beausobre's Notes on the New Testament.* (From *Mant*).

† *Archbishop Newcome.*

‡ “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”—St. Matt. v. 37.

§ *Canon Pyle.*

lawful in matters of importance appears from the practice of our Lord Himself, who, being adjured by the high priest in the name of God, answered to the adjurations; and from the example of St. Paul, who several times in his Epistles calls God to witness upon solemn occasions. In the Old Testament, and in the law, oaths are not only permitted but enjoined; and consequently could not be unlawful in themselves, nor immoral in their own nature. God Himself is frequently introduced swearing by Himself, by His truth, and by His own life. Hence it is extremely plain to all who are not perverse and contentious, that our Saviour's prohibition hath nothing to do with oaths taken upon proper occasions before the magistrate, but with oaths which are voluntary and unnecessary. 'Swear not at all,' that is, 'swear not in common conversation.' "

Archbishop Secker sums up some admirable remarks on this passage from St. James, by saying: "We have no manner of reason therefore to think that the Apostle disapproved swearing before a magistrate, to which his prohibition of swearing by heaven or by earth cannot possibly relate; or even swearing on any other solemn and needful occasion."\*

Coupling these theological views with the light of reason, with our own moral perceptions, and with a very extended experience, derived from daily observation, the great majority of Christians will not believe that oaths are not both lawful and salutary, and that Quakers have not

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\* A reference to the following passages will show that oaths were customary and lawful under the Old and New Dispensations: *Exod.* xxii. 2; *Ps.* cx. 4; *Rom.* ix. 1; *2 Cor.* i. 23; xi. 31; *Gal.* i. 20; *Heb.* vi. 16; *Rev.* x. 6.

upon this point also hastened their decadence, by their continued and pertinacious obstructiveness.\*

6. *That it is not lawful for Christians to resist Evil, or to War or Fight in any case.*

Alluding to the Quaker principles of non-resistance, an author has quaintly observed:—"As for those who, by taking from mankind all right of self-preservation, would have them still live in the world as naked as they came into it, I shall not wish them any hurt; but if I would, I could scarce wish them a greater than that they might feel the full effect and influence of their own opinion.†"

Setting on one side Fox's own views upon the lawfulness of war, which greatly varied within a few years, the Society of Friends has steadily and consistently advocated the principles of Peace.‡ But it is very singular that the

\* It is worthy of note that adjurations occur occasionally in Quaker writings; and they have a much more solemn effect than that confidence in self-inspiration which leads to such expressions as "The word of the Lord to you," &c., or "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," &c., or "by the Eternal power it is owned," &c. William Penn several times writes: "God is my record," "God is my record this day," &c., which is the most perfect form of a Christian oath, synonymous with our "So help me God." Fox also says: "In the presence of the Lord God I declare, as God is my witness," &c.

† *South's Works*, vol. vii., p. 79.

‡ That there were Quakers in abundance in Cromwell's army we have evidence from Fox's own writings, for he makes complaint that they were turned out because of their pertinacious adherence to "Thee and Thou," and for refusing to salute their officers. "Oh, Oliver!" he writes to the Protector in 1657, "thou shouldst not have stood trifling about small things. Do not stand cumbering

decline of Quakerism, and the gradual perfecting of the refinements of barbarism (to speak paradoxically), for the wholesale annihilation of the species, should have been coeval. And if it be true that improvement in education among Friends has taught them the impracticability of their own theories, and thereby proved a fruitful source of dismemberment, the fact would rather seem to bear out Mr. Buckle's views—that the decrease of war amongst mankind will be in the exact ratio of their civilization, without any reference to their religion. And, perhaps, if an angel could have come down from heaven, and walked into our churches and chapels, on the Fast-day with which we inaugurated our Russian campaign in 1854, and listened to the opinions expressed by God's ambassadors upon that occasion, he would have handed in at least a negative testimony to the soundness of our modern philosopher's opinion.\*

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thyself about dirty priests ;" and then he adds—"If thou hadst followed my counsels the Hollanders had been thy subjects ; Germany had given up to thy will ; and the Spaniard had quivered like a dry leaf ; the King of France should have bowed under thee his neck ; the Pope should have withered as in the winter : thou should'st have crumbled nations to dust ; therefore let thy soldiers go forth with a free and willing heart, that thou mayst rock nations as a cradle. For a mighty work hath the Lord to do in other nations, and their quakings and shakings are but entering. *So this is the word of the Lord God to thee*, as a charge to thee from the Lord God," &c.—*Snake in the Grass*, pp. 238, 239. Subsequently Fox wrote : "I who am of the world called George Fox do deny the carrying or drawing of any carnal sword against thee, Oliver Cromwell, or any man. . . . 'My kingdom is not of this world,' therefore 'I do not fight.'"

\* Some of the clergy, who saw "the hand of God in India" during the late mutiny, though they never thought of seeing it when every-

It is not proposed to touch upon the subject of *aggressive* warfare, which nothing can justify; but I shall briefly allude to that system of *defensive* warfare, which originates in a moral sense implanted in every man, of the necessity and expediency of self-preservation.

Mr. Hallam observes:—"The right of war—which we must here understand in the largest sense—the employment of force to resist force, though by private men, resides in all mankind. Solon, Grotius says, taught us that those Commonwealths would be happy wherein each man thought the injuries of others were like his own. The mere sociability of human nature ought to suggest this to us. And, though Grotius does not proceed with this subject, he would not have doubted that we have a right to protect the lives and goods of others against lawless violence, without the least reference to positive law or the command of a magistrate. If this has been preposterously doubted, or affected to be doubted, in England, of late years, it has been less owing to the pedantry which demands an express written law upon the most pressing emergency, than to lukewarmness, at the best, in the public cause of order and justice. The expediency of vindicating these by the slaughter of the aggressors must depend on the peculiar circumstances;

thing progressed satisfactorily, claim a peculiar familiarity with the designs of Providence upon all occasions of national disaster. And they are well supported by some of the editors of newspapers. A writer in the *New York Herald*, last June, expresses very comprehensive views concerning the chances of a rupture between England and the United States. "A naval war," he says, "is not the most improbable result; and every reflecting man must see that it is far from being a very undesirable thing to this country. *It may be that it is one of the inscrutable designs of Providence for working out the true and manifest destiny of this Great Republic.*"

but the right is paramount to any positive laws, even if, which with us is not the case, it were difficult to be proved from them.”\*

The question which really concerns us, as living in a mixed community of nations, is this: Are the order, and regularity, and social harmony of society most likely to be maintained by a tame submission to every insult to which “pacific principles” may expose them; or by a steady resistance, amounting, if necessary, to physical force, which shall so awe the offenders as to prevent a recurrence of encroachment and injury? No one for a moment doubts the beauty of that happy time which shall witness the leopard lying down with the kid, and a little child leading them: no one who has any acquaintance with morality, much less Christianity, disputes that quarrelling and fighting are great curses; that what they frequently eventuate in are greater curses still; and that

“The drying up a single tear has more  
Of honest fame than shedding seas of gore.”

But it will be true wisdom to remember that the opportunity to the individual of drying up tears, and of being engaged in various offices of charity, will only arise to him by the protection which he personally derives from the totality of that social state of which he is a part. How are its members to achieve individual good if they are indifferent as to the preservation of their collective integrity? To attempt to do away with the immediate evils of war, absolutely and entirely, without reference to greater evils which would subsequently result, is to indicate great ignorance of human nature, an unjustifiable

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\* *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, by Henry Hallam, vol. iii., pp. 187-8, fifth edit. London, 1855.

repudiation of social responsibility, and an entire misconception of relative claims and duties, as members of a civilized community.

Now supposing a barbarous nation, or even a civilized nation, under the sway of an ambitious and despotic ruler, were to visit this island of ours, and endeavour by force of arms to overturn its institutions, to lay waste its fields, to annihilate the instruments of its material prosperity, and to lead its people into captivity—would all that we hold dear (including our Religious Faith) be most likely to be preserved to us by a stupid submission to the aggressor's yoke—by acting up, in fact, to the principle of not allowing one cheek to be smitten without giving up the other to a similar indignity—or by the vigorous effort of a standing army, or of an enthusiastic and patriotic people, to expel the invader from our shores? To talk of treaties and arbitrations when the enemy is at your gates—when you are all but trampled on—is to perpetrate a joke only to be equalled by that of Mr. *Punch*, who advises, that the first thing to do when your house is on fire, is to keep yourself cool; or by that of a modern horse-tamer, who tells you that the way to tame a vicious brute, who bites and kicks at everybody, is to go quietly up and pat him on the neck. Think of Joseph Sturge parleying with a Turco or a Zouave about “peace principles,” and the “spirit of the Gospel!” Observe how difficult it is to bring two litigants to arbitration, even in a court of law, where the wisdom of the judge, the admonitions of counsel, and various concurring circumstances, are all favorable to an issue of compromise and peace. There can be no treaties between nations suddenly brought into contact, and inflamed by the worst passions, engendered on the one side by the desire to subjugate and plunder, and on the other by indignation

at the daring of the aggressor.\* What is to be done? You must be expeditious; you have no time to lose. Why, the barbarian, or the more civilized hero, with his '*à bas les Anglais,*' will cut your throat while you are attempting to ply him with passages from Scripture, on the beauties of brotherly love and peace. Gunpowder and common sense are true conservatives of Religion. Alas for human nature! the wisdom which is from above—the highest attainment of Christian ambition—must come to us shrouded in worldly wisdom, and made available to us through the medium of political considerations. And as society progresses, and civilization advances, and morality increases, we shall step upon that higher platform—the promised land of him only who recognizes *every* duty of religion, and every collateral assistance which can help to mould that religion into all that is divine and beautiful.

Thus it is that, in our present imperfect state, though

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\* Unhappily, those who know human nature better than Quakers are forced, from experience, to look upon the following incident as a piece of rare good fortune. Friends are fond of alluding to this Delaware picture as the true precedent: "Once indeed it was rumoured that on the Brandywine 500 Indians were assembled to concert a massacre. Immediately Caleb Pusey, with five Friends, hastened to the scene of anticipated danger. The sachem repelled the calumnious report with indignation, and the little griefs of the tribe were canvassed and assuaged. 'The Great God who made all mankind extends His love to Indians and English. The rain and the dews fall alike on the ground of both; the sun shines on us equally, and we ought all to love one another.' Such was the diplomacy of the Quaker envoy. The king of the Delawars answered: 'What you say is true. Go home and harvest the corn God has given you. We intend you no harm.'"—*Bancroft's History of the United States*, vol. ii. p. 646.

Alas! in modern times a Christian Emperor was not to be convinced or reasoned with after this sort.

still improving with the larger development of secular and religious instruction everywhere recognized, the cause of general advancement, and Christian excellence, may be expected to issue in the fulfilment of the splendid vision—"neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." And that this vision is more likely to be realized by that nation which remembers the Italian proverb, that "one sword keeps another in its scabbard;" or the Gallic one, that "He who bears the sword bears peace;" than by that which misinterprets the precept—"him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also."\*

It is this wisdom which recognizes the fact of human imperfections, varying with race and country, with soil and climate, with traditions and national customs, and discerns the relative bearing of each obstructive force, which constitutes the real efficiency of the Christian Missionary.

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\* "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." *St. Luke* iii. 14. It is stated that *do violence to no man*, means, do not exceed the legitimate bounds of your professional duty, by exercising it upon unnecessary occasions. Bishop Horne commenting on the above passage says: "St. John, here regulating the conduct of military persons, shows that no condition is excluded from salvation. The business of war is not of itself unlawful, since there have been soldiers who have not only been good Christians, but even great saints and generous martyrs. If all war had been contrary to the Gospel, St. John would not have allowed those who presented themselves before him to continue in that state. However, it is a state certainly full of difficulties and temptations."

And it is this gift, and a special aptitude for elaborating it into general usefulness, which has given to Dr. Livingstone a name which will not die. He does not say, with the Quaker, every man hath the witness of the Spirit in himself; that this Spirit teaches him, as it were, by inward breathings, made immediately and directly upon the heart, without the intervention of outward circumstances. But he says—I can spread Christianity, perhaps, in Africa (immense though the difficulty be) if I can show these poor creatures the material as well as immaterial advantages of the Faith which I bring with me. I must open up Commerce, which is as divine an institution as that for which it paves the way. I must show that the treasures with which nature has surrounded them are to be utilized by freedom of communication with ourselves; that this freedom of communication will arise from the construction of roads, and canals, and that general economy of labour which characterizes the land that sent me hither. We do not, however, communicate freely with those who do not try to assimilate themselves to our social and religious codes, because those codes are the necessary accompaniment and sequence of the general improvement which I inculcate. *This* life will be benefited by Christianity as well as the next. I do not begin by telling them they are polygamists, and therefore must first put away all their wives but one, as the condition of everlasting safety; though I know a Church in my own country which uses rather strong language about an “Athanasian Creed,” and deals out indubitable damnation to those who receive it not. But I tell them that their social condition will improve by the diminution, in their limited domestic spheres, of female tongues, and female rivalry; that they will have

more home-peace in the possession of one loving wife, than in that of ten wrangling jades. And hereafter I may say, that this union to only one, symbolizes the divine union between the Christ which I preach, and the Church of the living God which He hath bequeathed to us. And thus gradually I shall map out the heathen country where God was not known, into a land ready for the less complicated and less material achievements of those who will come after me. This is the sort of labour which everyone recognizes to be true, because based upon an enduring foundation. It begins at the beginning. It is preparatory, and progressive; and, as such, it is worth all the rhapsodical details of what are named individual conversions, furnished by well-meaning but ignorant Missionaries, for the home perusal of "serious" housemaids, and the sentimental disciples of a "frothy pietism."

And so—to recur to the more immediate subject of War—civilization and education increase our means of adjusting national as well as personal disputes; enable us to weigh conflicting evidence; give us larger views of social responsibilities and moral obligations; impress us with the reciprocity of human action and interest; bring us into closer contact and more intimate relationship with races at extreme ends of the globe, and point out to all the advantages of commercial enterprise, and social intercommunication. Is not this to pave the way for that Gospel which says "Blessed are the peacemakers"? Is not this to do our part towards that evangelization which is to fill the Earth with "the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"? Is it not the way to entirely efface from among us that greatest curse by which mankind has ever been afflicted—religious persecutions, the "agents of which have unhappily been

chiefly men of the purest intentions, of the most admirable and unsullied morals" ?\*

These considerations, therefore, lead us to believe that the position of the Society of Friends in respect of war, is thoroughly untenable, because it ignores the manifold imperfections of our social state, and, through that mistaken course, is unable to adopt the legitimate means by which man individually and collectively will realize the Saviour's affirmation, that "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit the earth."†

\* Mr. Buckle says, in his *History of Civilization in England*, that the decline of the warlike spirit among us is chiefly "owing to the increase of the intellectual classes, to whom the military classes are necessarily antagonistic ;" and that this general movement has been accelerated by "three vast though subsidiary causes—the invention of gunpowder, the discoveries of political economy, and the discovery of improved means of Locomotion." *Vide Chap. IV.* The whole subject is worthy of attentive consideration. It appears to me that Mr. Buckle's views have received a large measure of support from the recent campaign in Italy. What has terminated this war so rapidly, and so unexpectedly? Has it been an increased perception of the truth of Christianity? Nothing of the kind. The War has been crushed by the very refinement of its barbarities, which horrified the two chief movers in it as well as the entire civilized world. The railroad which brought up the French troops at Magenta exercised a tremendous influence upon the duration of the Campaign. All the combining circumstances of civilization preclude the possibility of any lengthened war again desolating Europe.

† There is something very striking and instructive, in the manner in which two of our very ablest and most popular legislators fell in public estimation, by the views which they proclaimed, in tones of splendid eloquence and real Christian earnestness, with respect to the Crimean war. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright have not yet recovered from that rapid and (as it appears to me) unmerited declension.

There are several minor points included under this heading which it is not necessary to dilate upon—such as the rejection of our

VI. *A general recognition on the part of best Friends, of the necessity of a higher Educational Standard, adapted to the requirements and the progressive Spirit of the Age—this recognition involving, as a matter of course, a repudiation of their “ancient principles,” a fraternization with the World, and a consequent separation from Themselves.*

If it be true that the world has never done justice to Quakerism, it is equally true (as has been recently observed) that Quakerism has never done justice to the world. The views of the early Quakers were—this life is a very wretched affair; every thing is thoroughly bad and wicked; every man who differs from us must be wrong; the best plan is to have nothing to do with the world in the way of pleasure or intellectual improvement; hurl vengeance against all opposers; the Spirit will testify that you are thereby doing God service, and securing for yourself the joys of heaven. Now I unhesitatingly make this statement; and if any one doubts its truth, I propose to him a not very pleasing task—that of dipping into *Fox’s Journal*, or into *the early works of William Penn*, or *the works of Edward Burroughs*, and other volumes of the “ancient” literature of the Society of Friends. He will there find that human learning was held in utter contempt, and that everything was deemed subordinate to the paramount importance of the “witness of the Spirit.”\* Nor is this to be wondered at when

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“heathen” nomenclature of our months and days; funeral rites, &c. They are all antagonistic to the usual customs to the world, and give an additional obstructive colouring to the proceedings of the Society of Friends.

\* Mr. Clarkson says that the real depreciation of human learning did not commence, Fox being excepted, until the second generation of Quakerism. I find, however, that the writings of the first period are for the more part characterized by bombastic ignorance. It is

we consider the fanatical ignorance of Fox himself, and of the great majority of his immediate disciples. Even the learned and verbose Barclay was not exempt from the popular delusion upon this subject. Fox was for "famishing people from words" (as he expresses it), because all "languages are to him but dust who was before languages were." The Apologist's definition of true learning is unique, and worthy of transcription, as a real literary curiosity. "Though then we make not human learning necessary, yet we are far from excluding true learning; *to wit, that learning which proceedeth from the inward teachings and instructions of the Spirit*, whereby the soul learneth the secret ways of the Lord, becomes acquainted with many inward travels and exercises of the mind; and learneth by a living experience how to overcome evil, and the temptations of evil, by following the Lord and walking in his light, and waiting daily for wisdom and knowledge, immediately from the revelation thereof; and so layeth up these heavenly and Divine lessons in the good treasure of the heart; as honest Mary did the sayings which she heard," &c., &c.\* Barclay illustrates this proposition by a poor shoemaker, who could not read, refuting "a professor of divinity's false assertion from Scripture." He says in another place: "As for the other part of philosophy, which is called moral, or ethicks, it is not so necessary to Christians who have the rules of the Holy Scriptures, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which they can be much better instructed."†

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true that William Penn was a man of erudition, and that both by his literature and by his conduct (as I have previously intimated) he redeemed in later, the wild extravagancies and enthusiasm of his earlier, years.

\* *Barclay's Apology*, pp. 307-8.

† *Ibid.* p. 312. William Penn learned wisdom (as I have pre-

The most striking feature of early Quakerism was its rapid declension, after the excitement of the first fanatical outburst had subsided. People became tired of (what Mr. Leslie happily calls) "going a religion hunting," and of ignoring all the enjoyments, the educational improvements, and the useful purposes, of life. It was natural to suppose that in every young Quaker family there should be a few youthful minds which, however trammelled by a depressing creed, should break asunder their hereditary bonds, for that expansiveness which is at once the cause and the measure of aspiration. And this led to a more general and polite educational system being introduced into the Society, and so constituted a departure from the first principles of "ancient Quakerism." This corporate organization, therefore, was doomed under any circumstances. That which was the beau ideal of intellectual stagnation would not attract in an age essentially progressive; and the endeavour to prevent stagnation by more liberal mental training, was at once to remove the fetters, show youthful minds their power, and make them sensible of the advantages of freedom and flight. What was intended to benefit the Society absolutely ruined it.

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viously pointed out) after a few years of suffering; and some of his later writings contrast strangely with his earlier productions, and are beautiful specimens of epigrammatic terseness. He had found out that other things besides the Spirit were of immense importance. "Virtue," he says, "is the true life-principle of society. All history proves this; but although immorality is the chief destroyer, *a mistaken policy may be little inferior to it in mischief*. . . . The truest test of faith is practice. He who acts well believes well. Morality is debased when tested from above. Virtue may be necessary to a state of grace, but grace is not indispensable to virtue. It is a grand mistake to disparage morality, under pretence of looking to higher things. In the world there is nothing higher than goodness."—(*From Penn's Collected Works*.)

“Vaulting ambition” did “o’erleap itself, and fall on the other.” And so it has come to pass, that during the last half century Quakerism has produced, or, rather, the age has produced, in spite of Quakerism, some of the noblest characters. In the very effort to throw off their chains, and emancipate themselves from the ignorance of their predecessors, Friends have unwittingly borne testimony to the progressive influence of the times, and against the frigid formality of a decrepid creed. And these bright luminaries have been the more noticed because of the source from whence they sprang, and because of their still adherent peculiarities.\* All the best Quakers, in fact, have of necessity ignored the principles of ancient Quakerism, in so far as they have associated themselves with others for the amelioration of the species—retaining only, and that in a very limited degree, their peculiarities in the matters of dress, and language, and mode of worship. “The moment (as Mr. Maurice observes) they began to do anything besides bearing individual testimonies, the moment they attempted to perform some general, social, organic acts on behalf of their fellow-creatures, that moment they found it necessary to fraternize with the members of other Societies.”† Whilst a large pro-

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\* There is nothing uncharitable in saying that the well-known Quaker peculiarities in dress, manner, and phraseology, proved the chief source of their attraction on the Continent during the visits of the English Friends, of whom Mrs. Fry and her brother formed a part. The undoubted earnestness which they displayed, and the thorough excellence of their lives, secured for them all respect and sympathy. For the same reasons Mrs. Fry was privileged to say anything she pleased, give friendly hints to Louis Philippe, and advise Prince Albert to bring up his children properly. But this sort of impertinence would not again be countenanced.

† *The Kingdom of Christ, or Hints to a Quaker*, by F. D. Maurice, M.A. London, 1842, vol. i., p. 67.

portion of strict disciplinarians remained still in bondage, thundering their threats of "disownment" against those who were only waiting the opportunity to disown themselves. These were the unprogressive and self-complacent ones who so horrified Mrs. Fry, helped to drive her children from the fold, and pierced the sensitive nature of poor Joseph John Gurney with more than mortal agony. We all know what the former has done; and I have already recorded some of her noblest sentiments. But, be it observed, she did what she did, and earned for herself an undying fame—not because she was a Quaker, for she bore no testimony to anything but the shallowness of "ancient principles," but—because she was a noble Christian philanthropist. She would have been a Wilberforce or a Nightingale under a more refined discipleship, or a Xavier under a more realistic creed. She was born to do good. She would have loved and laboured (and her brother likewise); she would have toiled, but not suffered, anywhere. No! the suffering was the unquiet of the creed, in a sensitive mind, and in a heart full of love and sincerity. It was that awful doctrine of the "Spirit" pushed to its extreme limits—that terrible system of mental introversion—and leaving them without rest the moment activity ceased, which made the misery of this brother and sister.\* The self-complacent are proof against it, the offensive feature of their religious character arising from a supposed superiority, and thereby from a fancied security. But it is otherwise with the good; there we

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\* "Again, there are instances in which a mild meditative humour perverted by some false system of belief, or excessive sensibilities, that have chanced to be torn or outraged in the world, or much physical timidity, combined with lofty sentiments, produce the effect of introverting gloomy emotions upon the heart."—*Fanaticism*, by Isaac Taylor, p. 71.

have the torture—the tornado of religious feelings—where all should be quietness and peace. Whilst Mrs. Fry was labouring among the prisoners, and cleansing Newgate from its abominable pollutions; whilst J. J. Gurney was employed in the literary pursuits which he so much loved; Allen was rapidly elucidating the difficulties of chemical philosophy, and engaged in the general prosecution of the physical sciences. All the best Friends, in a word, were impressed with the truth of Gurney's dictum—"We shall never thrive upon ignorance."\* Reynolds was actively engaged at Bristol in organizing systematic visitation of the poor. Hutchinson and others of the excellent were progressively employed likewise. The horrors of the slave-trade, and the revelations of prison discipline, were drawing the earnest labourers from their hereditary

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\* Allen (who was the friend of Davy, of Babington, of Wilberforce and Astley Cooper) prosecuted his studies in the field of physical science with so much earnestness, that his mother became afraid that her son would lose sight of "the one thing needful." Her letters to him are curious, as showing the unexpansiveness of an earlier generation, which had scarcely learned that Religion was not a complete insulation from the duties of life, and requiring undivided attention. She writes to him during an illness, which she thought would be favourable to the receipt of religious impressions, by drawing his mind from science: "I believe it may be said of thee as was said to Peter, 'Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat;' but I humbly hope that the same advocate will plead for thee that 'thy faith fail not.'" On another occasion she writes:—"Thou art too much absorbed in study, my beloved child, for, however innocent it may be, yet, like the doves in the Temple, it fills up a place in the temple of thy heart, which ought to be otherwise occupied, and dedicated unto the Lord, in whose hands thou wouldst become an instrument to promote the knowledge of pure Christianity. Come, my beloved, if a right hand or a right eye be called for, give it up."—*Memoir of William Allen, F.R.S.*, by James Sherman, p. 50. London, 1857.

exclusiveness, to devote themselves to the common cause of general instruction and amelioration, with the good and earnest of every creed. And their free intercommunion with others, engaged in the same vineyard, led them to perceive the truth of what William Penn said, in his later years—that measuring conduct by creeds was often a mischievous fallacy; and to acknowledge the judgment of Mrs. Fry, which led her to affirm, that “no study was equal to that of mankind, and nothing so likely to enlarge the mind as society, and the good and the cultivated of every nation.” This is a distinct repudiation of the principles of “ancient Quakerism.” “It ought to be our never-ceasing object (said Coleridge) to make people think, not feel.” This was exactly what the unfettering of Quakerism was tending to, though those who had been slaves to the fundamental doctrine of “the universal and saving Light” could not think of their First Love without many sorrows at the little she had achieved, and at the certainty of her dissolution; and could not emancipate themselves—whatever they might do for the young—from that self-anatomy of feeling, which constituted, in highest and purest natures, the very madness of their misery.

And surely no one who knows anything of human nature, who is at all familiar with mental science, and with the history of mankind, will doubt that the progress of civilization in modern times is owing to our increased recognition of the handmaids to Religion, which are to be found in augmenting knowledge, and in the cumulative evidence of physical discoveries. For does not knowledge, every step she takes, grapple with degradation, and raise up a barrier against the encroachments of superstition?\*

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\* “Reason gives us knowledge; while faith only gives us belief, which is a part of knowledge, and is, therefore, inferior to it. It is

Must not he have higher views of the wonders of nature, and of the great providential scheme of which we are ourselves a part, who can see in both, that unvarying law which is the keystone of perfect harmony and coaptation, rather than that capricious interference of the Deity which would necessitate a fresh act—a new miracle—for all the details of Universal Government? Must not his religious sense be quickened into more confiding love, who knows that God has given us such power of familiarizing ourselves with His natural dealings, that we can tell, to a year, and to a minute, an eclipse which shall happen to a future generation; and who looks upon each objective revelation of this kind as a culminating point of law and order—rather than if, as of yore, every natural phenomenon of a not everyday occurrence was regarded as a special indication of heavenly judgment? I have seen the cackling and grinning hags in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, yelling at the frigid blood of their patron Saint, because it would not vivify into new life with sufficient speed to quiet their superstitious fears; and I have thought it a sight so degrading, as even to affect for a while the stability of one's Faith. What can religion ever do there? Where is the "Universal and Saving Light" of the Quaker creed? Everything is powerless in such a country, unless you carry Religious Freedom in one hand, and Intellectual Culture in the other. These are the agents for the proper husbanding of that soil, in which are to strike downward the roots, and grow upward the branches, of that wonderful engraftment of the supernatural which shall fructify into Everlasting Life. This is the progressive spirit which is characteristic of the age,

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by reason, and not by faith, that we must discriminate in religious matters; and it is by reason alone that we can distinguish truth from falsehood."—*Chillingworth*.

which repudiates alike the Fanaticism of the Brand, of the Symbol, of the Banner, of Ignorance, of Intolerance, and of spiritual self-sufficiency. The knowledge of the verity, that religion, to be effective, must be preceded by intellectual culture, has been gained by the Society of Friends—has been gathered by the light of their own history, and by the moral perceptions with which God has gifted them, as largely as with the Light of His Holy Spirit; by the evidence furnished by their own eyes of what has been done, and is being done, to hasten that glorious kingdom which shall be fitted for the Saviour's second Advent.

VII. *The exclusive character of the Society, and the system of disowning members for breach of Discipline; and its non-Proselytism.*

It has been the constant effort of the most earnest and liberal-minded of the Society of Friends, during the last fifty years, to obtain some relaxation of that rigid code, which disowns members for breaches of social and religious discipline. They have been so warmed into expansiveness, by the age's progressive spirit, so impressed by the lifeless formality of an unadvancing system, and so led to sympathize with the natural desires of their youthful disciples to emulate in all things the excellent of every Christian sect, that they have exposed themselves, from within their own body, to the ungenerous censures of bigotry and intolerance. The number, too, of really exemplary individuals, has not been small, in the Society of Friends, in proportion to those who have been more solicitous to preserve the distinctiveness of a creed than to give freedom to the Gospel of Christ. Still, from some cause or other, the concessions have not been made in general Council; and the discipline has not been

relaxed, save in occasional instances, for the protection of influential members.\*

It is in respect of 'Marriage' that the greatest number of Disownments have occurred. It was natural, of course, in a rapidly contracting field of choice, that young Quakers of both sexes, taught by the progressiveness of the period to mix more in the world, and to imbibe a more comprehensive wisdom, should discover opportunities for forming matrimonial ties, *out* of the pale of their own eclecticism. Many were too glad to embrace this graceful way of being "dealt with," in preference to a more painful method, upon doctrinal grounds, of repudiating the continued shelter of the creed which had nurtured them. It was something to marry a pretty girl *out* of a drab bonnet. It was more to marry her Religion also. The great episode of life became invested with a double interest. The *Rules of Discipline* are very plain and unmistakeable upon this social question, and display so much intolerance as to have received the undisguised disapproval of Mrs. Fry.† The following entry occurs in her *Journal*: "1st mo. 2nd, 1832

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\* "It is expedient to hush up complaints when they affect persons eminent in the Ministry."—*Spirit of the Hat*, by William Penn. London, 1673.

† "In order to put a stop to an undue liberty in contracting marriages with such as are not of our Society, it is advised that all parents and guardians of children do take especial care, as much as in them lies, to prevent their children from running into such marriages; and that the Friends of each particular meeting, as also of the monthly meeting to which such persons belong, do, in the wisdom and power of truth, use their endeavours to put a stop to the said evil, by admonishing such as may attempt to marry as aforesaid; but if they refuse to take counsel, or to go on to marry as aforesaid, that then such persons be dealt with according to the good order of truth, and judgment fixed upon all who take such an undue liberty." 1719—1833.—*Rules of Discipline*, p. 99.

—We had the subject of marriage much before us this last year: it has brought us to some test of our feelings and principles respecting it. That it is highly desirable and important to have young persons settle in marriage, particularly young men, I cannot doubt; and that it is one of the most likely means of their preservation, religiously, morally, and temporally. Moreover, it is highly desirable to settle with one of the same religious views, habits, and education as themselves; more particularly for those who have been brought up as Friends, because their mode of education is peculiar: but if any young persons, upon arriving at an age of discretion, do not feel themselves really attached to our peculiar views and habits, then I think their parents have no right to use undue influence with them, as to the connexions they may incline to form; provided they be with persons of religious lives and conversation. I am of opinion that parents are apt to exercise too much authority upon the subject of marriage, and that there would be more really happy unions if young persons were left more to their own feelings and discretion. Marriage is too much treated like a business concern, and love, that essential ingredient, too little respected in it. I disapprove the Rule of our Society that disowns persons for allowing a child to marry one not a Friend—*it is a most undue and unchristian restraint, as far as I can judge it.*”\*

Joseph John Gurney was equally alive to the dangers from this very source, and he frequently alludes to them; rather as a matter of fear, however, than regret. There are many breaches of discipline for which the extreme measure of “disownment” is resorted to, if admonition, and advice, and warning, are not found sufficiently effective. Such are: proceeding against a fellow member at law, neglecting

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\* *Memoir of Life of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. ii., pp. 139, 140.

meetings for worship, receiving or paying tithes, defamation of character, defrauding the revenue, illegal dealings in the public funds, the making or selling instruments of war, and being concerned in privateers or armed vessels, unsoundness of doctrine, &c., &c. And it has been affirmed (I know not with what truth) that in the case of a notorious public offender, who has exposed himself to the justice of the penal laws of his country, the Society is so ashamed of the delinquent, and so jealous of its own reputation, as to disown him by legislation of a retrospective character—that is by an “act of dealing” which shall make the date of his expulsion prior to the public disgrace from which he is now suffering. Whether this be a true charge or not, I am quite sure that the best and most excellent of Quakers would never lend themselves to such a specious mode of retaining an acquired reputation for collective purity.

It is through the medium of disownment, however, by reason of “extra-mural” marriages, and the sanction of such ties by parents and guardians, that the numerical force of the Society has been most largely diminished. It is true that delinquents, by acknowledging their errors, may receive condonation and readmission. But who that has ever left the fold has come back to it? \*

And the general feeling of the community with respect to disownment, is that it indicates a spiritual pride and an assumed superiority, somewhat analogous to the presumptuous daring of more Catholic pretensions. This regulation of their discipline is surely at variance with the humility to which Quakers lay claim, and to the entire spirit of the Gospel dispensation. He who thrice denied his Lord was

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\* The annual average of Marriages in England and Wales is as 1 to 122 of the general population. In the Society of Friends it as 1 to 226. The annual number of “Disownments,” by reason of members marrying *out* of the Quaker pale, is something like 60.

neither “dealt with,” nor “disowned;” but left to the reproving of his own conscience, and—he “went out and wept bitterly.” And he became that mighty one whom Catholicism has invested with the largest measure of grace and power, from the assumed individual character of the injunction: “Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Surely it is the duty of every Christian Society to heal the breaches in its ranks, to reclaim the fallen, to sustain the downcast, to extend its sympathy to all. It is a nobler work to gather in than to expel. It is a loftier calling to assure the doubting, to strengthen the unstable, to comfort the spiritually afflicted, to “go out into the highways and compel them to come in,” than to shroud oneself in the narrow formality of a rigid creed, when every other creed is “moving heaven and earth to make one proselyte.”

For the refusal to proselytize is one of the many reasons why, in an age of unparalleled activity and progress—an age in which we are “harnessing the vapours to the rushing car,” and sending our *ἑπεα πτερόεντα* with lightning speed to another hemisphere—Quakerism is dying of absolute inanition. “The Universal Light in every man’s own heart” does not, somehow or other, christianize the world, as Fox and Barclay said it would, and was alone capable of doing. To ignore the medium of human agencies, and organized instrumentalities, is at once to repudiate God’s own appointments, and His direct providential arrangements. If Quakerism is the right way, surely it is worth while to show it to be the right way, by some other means than by a rigid exclusiveness, by the publication of *Rules of Discipline*, and by attributing working power to unsubstantial and unappreciable in-

fluences. "I do not wish him (the Quaker) to have a less spiritual conception of Christian morality, I want him not practically to exhaust it of its spirit by depriving it of its body. Above all, I want him to perceive that the scheme which he has set up in the world for the purpose of establishing peace and charity in it, is a far less effectual one than the scheme which God has set up in it for the same end."\* There is as much tact and worldly wisdom required, in presenting a particular creed to an ignorant people, as in advertising a new discovery to an enterprising community. Whatever article we have to dispose of, whether it be good or indifferent, the secret of its success, in a measure, will lie in putting it before the public in a presentable and attractive form. It is as true in the religious, as in the intellectual or material, world. A few good, earnest, self-denying men, who have a thorough knowledge of human nature, will do more to extend the borders of a religious sect (where superstition is not an hereditary national curse), in one year, than reservation, and "waiting" for spiritual movings, and platitudes about "Holy Church," will do in twenty. A very ordinary physician (by comparison) will make a fortune in half the time that it will take another man, who has twice his brains or his principle, simply because he has the tact to make what information he has, *available* to every one with whom he is brought in contact. He is gifted with the *savoir-faire* which is the secret of success. There are some men, Mr. Binney says, who *can't* get on, push them as you may. They are weighted at both ends, and down

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\* *The Kingdom of Christ ; or, Hints to a Quaker.* By F. D. Maurice, M.A., vol. ii., p. 360.

they go, in spite of moral excellence, physical health, spiritual earnestness, and every kind of external advantage. In the same way the selection of a happy title for a book, the bringing it out at the right moment, and at the right price, and through the instrumentality of an enterprising publisher, will give it a sale which a far more meritorious work will never attain to, without these well-timed helps. I know many better sauces than "Lea and Perrin's Worcestershire," but then the respective proprietors did not or could not advertise. I know many exhibitions more interesting and instructive than the Baker-street Bazaar; but Madame Tussaud has tact, and money, and gewgaw glitter in a big room, and a "Chamber of Horrors" in a little one—which the world knows how to appreciate. I know many better preachers than Mr. Spurgeon, but then they won't gesticulate, "thunder at high heaven," and pander to the depravity of a particular form of public taste; and they live and die—not, thank God, unhonoured, but, at least, relatively unknown. I know many a worse creed than the best development of modern Quakerism, but, save its prototype, I do not know a less attractive one, or one so rapidly declining. This ought not to have been so: such men as Gurney, and Allen, and Hutcheson, and Reynolds, and Forster, ought never to have suffered this, believing, as they did, in the superiority of their own religion, and having been endowed, as they were, with the expansiveness of modern civilization. But I am wrong. These men could not help themselves. The very expansiveness I have alluded to was the very breaking down of that hedge which for two centuries had hedged them from the world—a declaration of the powerlessness of their "ancient" creed—an acknowledgment of a growing sym-

pathy, and a larger love. Every forward step was an educe<sup>ment</sup> *from* their frigid and unattractive eclecticism. How then could Quakerism, as such, proselytize, with all the concurrent circumstances of a progressive age against her? What attraction had she to present? Her outward apparel would frighten any one gifted with a sense of the ludicrous; her impassivity and serious deportment would depress the natural and heaven-born cheerfulness of any youth; her antagonisms to pleasures and enjoyments, suggested as necessary by the intuitive perceptions of our own natures, could not for a moment be entertained; whilst her fundamental doctrine is repudiated by the history of every past age, and is an intangible subtlety to the present one. And consequently she made no converts, save occasionally in some stray Protestant, who imagined himself (or *herself*) to be satiated with worldly pleasures, and sought in a Quaker convent, that is in the Quaker "world," a protection from life's vanities and dissipations. This is precisely what happened to the most celebrated of modern converts to the Society of Friends. But hers was the wrong nature for it, and her monastic initiation was at the wrong period, just when discipline was relaxing, and doing a not insensible homage to the world. The consequence was, that though she "assumed the garb, and even the shibboleth of the sect," Mrs. Opie was really no more a Quaker than I am. She continued the same cheerful, happy, lively woman to the end of life. There are no gloomy and depressing thoughts in her letters, no anatomy of "religious feelings" in her Journal; and if (as J. J. Gurney said) we are "all to be true Quakers in heaven," I do not think we shall find her there. She was visiting among her friends; she was entering into all the gaities of Paris, alone, and in-

cognito.\* She was "enjoying la Baronne's party, and her tea and her cakes, and coming home a little past midnight."† At another time she "had a brilliant party of distinguished persons."‡ She was dazzled by the splendour of the shops in the Palais Royal; she enjoyed the merry sight of the Tuileries Gardens, and the groups of buoyant natures there congregated.

"She loved to go sit in the sun there,  
The flowers and fountains to see,  
And to think of the deeds that were done there,  
In the glorious year ninety-three."

Mrs. Opie's nature, says her biographer, was "many-sided, and elastic; she could, and did, take a living interest in all the varied forms of life and society, and could be *in* the world though she was not *of* it." This was what constituted the very perfection of the convert, and showed her to be no real Quaker. *He* professes to be neither *in* it nor *of* it. But we know what is the actual fact *de re pecuniariâ*. Mrs. Opie could fall in with the advice of those around her, and record in her Parisian Journal: "My friends here have persuaded me to be at home on one particular day; and so on the Seventh-day morning I receive from one to five, and I have *beaucoup de monde*."§ And then on "First-day morning" it was: "A night of wind! a day of rain! went to the Champs Elysées. Our sitting was still, and I trust favoured."|| It is really quite refreshing to read the lively letters and journal of this

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\* 1830. 5th of 11th Mo.—Well (said I to myself when I was left alone) here I am actually at Paris! and alone at Paris: few of my friends in England knew I was coming, and none in France know that I am here! A new and strange position; but the *incognito* is not without its charms! (Journal.)—*Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, p. 249. 2nd edit., 1854.

† *Ibid.*, p. 254. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 280. § *Ibid.*, p. 267. || *Ibid.*, p. 254.

excellent woman, after the morbidly depressing ones of Mrs. Fry and Joseph J. Gurney, and to observe the estimation in which she was still held by her former friends.

Lady Charleville writes to her such an interesting epistle, and pays in it such a compliment to the Society of Friends (of which she thought Mrs. Opie was the type of individual membership), that I shall partly transcribe it. "London, le 10<sup>me</sup> Avril, 1828. Pour avoir le plaisir de te tutoyer, je t'écris, ma chère, en François, ou l'on tutoye naturellement celles que l'on aime. . . . Et je te jure que, quand tu te ferois Bramine, cela me seroit égal, tant que tu conserverais pour moi la même bonté que jadis ! . . . Pour la secte dont tu fais partie,—je la respecte au-delà de toutes les autres. Je ne vois rien d'outré dans leur façons dépenser, et je voudrais être assez bonne pour me conduire comme eux. Viens nous voir—j'en serai trop enchantée; ton cœur n'est point changé, et je suis sûre que ta costume ne te rendra pas moins intéressante pour tes amis. Comptez, ma chère, que le temps ne fait nul effet sur moi, pour changer à l'intérêt que je prendrai toute ma vie à toi."\*

And Southey admirably alludes to the unchangeable excellence of this interesting and accomplished woman, in a letter which he wrote to her, and of which Mrs. Fry afterwards requested a copy, "because I think that there is much truth in its contents."†

"I have another woman in my mind's eye; one who has been the liveliest of the lively, the gayest of the gay; admired for her talents by those who knew her only in her writings, and esteemed for her worth by those who were acquainted with her in the relations of private life;

\* *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, p. 216.

† *Ibid*, p. 243.

one who, having grown up in the laxest sect of semi-christians, felt the necessity of vital religion, while attending upon her father with dutiful affection, during the long and painful infirmities of his old age; and who has now joined a sect distinguished from all others by its formalities and enthusiasm, because it was among its members that she first found the lively faith for which her soul thirsted. She has assumed the garb and even the shibboleth of the sect, not losing, in the change, her warmth of heart and cheerfulness of spirit, nor gaining by it any increase of sincerity; for with these nature had endued her, and society, even that of the great, had not corrupted them. The resolution, the activity, the genius, the benevolence, which are required for such a work,\* are to be found in her, and were she present in person, as she is in imagination, I should say to her . . . Thou art the woman!"†

It should seem, therefore, that the spirit of Quakerism was not to be embraced so easily by a cheerful and intelligent nature, which was not, at the period of its initiation, assuming for the first time the spirit of Christianity. It was the augmenting liberality of the Society, and the beautiful characters of some of its best women who resided in Norwich, and not the Religion of George Fox or Robert Barclay, which allured Mrs. Opie. And she at once lent a graceful charm to Friendship, by her literary attainments and her many virtues, while she gave a most well-timed impetus to the increasing desire within the Quaker pale, for a larger foundation, and a more comprehensive creed.

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\* The establishment of Societies for reforming the internal management of Hospitals and Infirmarys; so as "to do for the hospitals what Mrs. Fry had already done for the prisons."

† *Southey's Colloquies*, vol. iii., p. 322.

Proselytism, then, on the part of the Society of Friends, is simply a repudiation of first principles, and a depreciation of the value of all its antecedents. Not that Fox and his immediate disciples did not attempt by every means in their power, to undervalue and abuse every religion but their own : but the moment the extravagant enthusiasm of the first outburst had subsided, Quakerism became that feeble impassivity which refused to lend itself to anything of a persuading character, and left all to the unseen workings of the Spirit. Whilst the yielding to the progressive influence of the age, during the last fifty years, has involved a cession of many points which were formerly deemed essentials, and has made proselytism only another name for self-abandonment.

VIII. *A growing conviction on the part of the most educated and enlightened Quakers, that the notorious material prosperity of the Society does not accord with its exalted spiritual profession, though it does not absolutely militate against the moral character of individual members.*

Quakers have proved no exception to the general rule, that where once the *amor nummi* is implanted, the *amor crescendi* follows as an inevitable sequence. It is certain that, both among friends and enemies, there has been a very general opinion, that these gentle enthusiasts have been peculiarly sensible of the advantages of material gain. Nor does this opinion derive any diminution from the fact, that one is naturally led to contrast the desire for the aggrandizement of wealth, with the exalted spiritual professions of the descendants of Fox and Penn. The Society has, from the first, "professed" a high standard : it must not, therefore, complain if it is tried by that which is entirely and gratuitously of its own creation. It has been written of late, perhaps with somewhat too caustic a

severity, that : " The Quakers as a body are almost as rich as the Jews. They are almost always employed in commercial affairs, and, generally speaking, with signal success. They are the keenest and most successful of bankers and brewers. Indeed they succeed as men of business much as the Puritans succeeded as soldiers. A carnal bill-discounter has no more chance against a Friend in the same way of business, than Prince Rupert's dragoons had against Cromwell's Ironsides."\*

This state of things may be compatible with the strictest honour and integrity ; but it is easy to understand, how the best and purest of the Society should view the most notorious weakness of their brethren as a living evidence of faithlessness. And it has been so much the more glaring, from an assumed indifference to creature comforts, and material pleasures, which no one can afford to underrate, whose moral nature is equipoised and healthful. Our great lexicographer had a peculiar contempt for those who pretended that they had no regard for animal enjoyments. " Some people," he says, " have a foolish way of not minding, or *pretending not to mind*, what they eat. For my part I mind my belly very studiously ; for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." Now it is true that a man who was wont to slobber over his waistcoat, and leave unctuous droppings upon his bib ; who could drink fourteen cups of tea at a sitting, abusing Nonconformists in the most unmeasured terms, is not that type of excellence which we would set up for imitation, in things pertaining to gastronomy or to charity. But the contempt expressed in vigorous language, by one of the most vigorous minds of the 18th century,

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\* *Saturday Review*, July 3, 1858.

for an unreal indifference to the entertainments of the table, is not altogether inappropriate in this place.

An apologist for Quakers, whose name is inseparably connected with the slave-trade, and who wrote his dreary *Portraiture* of the Society of Friends at the beginning of the present century, admits that a money-getting character has always been given to Quakers, and that some author of his period had observed that they follow their concerns in pursuit of riches "with a step as steady as time, and with an appetite as keen as death." But he is of opinion that the charge is not altogether well founded, that it has arisen in a great measure from their well-known frugal and inexpensive habits—from, in fact, their incomings being always considerably larger than their outgoings.

We must remember, however, in estimating the value of Mr. Clarkson's views, that he is in the largest sense such an "Apologist" for the Society of Friends, that it is marvellous he was not one of its members; that he wrote his treatise more than fifty years ago, and that in many points it may have but slight relative bearing to the present generation. The spirit of advanceement has been such and so general; mercantile interests have so extended; the commercial character of the country has been so developed; and the desire for material aggrandizement has become such a complete passion with certain classes, during the last half century, as to give England, over every other nation, the pre-eminence of wealth. It would have been singular if Quakers had escaped the general influence to which all other communities were obnoxious, for they are but men, of singular gravity of deportment, and singular eccentricity of costume. They did *not* escape it, and the Society of Friends, like every other Society, imbibed the pecuniary spirit. If it was right and founded upon Scrip-

ture to send forth the envoys of "the gallery" without purse and without scrip, knowing that the Lord would provide for them; it was equally right and Scriptural to remember, that "he that provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Nevertheless, the best and purest of Quakers noted the deterioration of their religious body, owing to the grasping avarice and entire devotion to Mammon, for which many members became notoriously conspicuous; and were led to exclaim with one of their chiefs, in reference to their own decadence: "Alas! for the power of the world, the flesh, and the enemy!" Mrs. Fry was constantly lamenting the contrast between the "love of money" so apparent, and "our lofty spiritual professions" so vaunted. "I want to see," she said, "less love of gain, and more largeness of heart." And Joseph John Gurney (himself one of the most liberal and ungrasping of men, always fearful lest he should save too much and give away too little) was terribly oppressed with the thought of what Lombard-street was doing to antagonize spirituality in his brother. "Mayest thou," he writes to him, "be preserved in close watchfulness, with prayer, that the trammels of the world may not hinder the growth of the immortal seed, or prevent thy being wholly dedicated to the love, fear, and service of God. The world will have its cares, but we need not imbibe its spirit, and let us henceforth keep our hands clean, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."\* This Christian advice from a brother and a minister, to one who (to adopt the words of his biographer) "*was in the habit of referring every event in the course of his city affairs to the overruling providence of God,*"† may not seem alto-

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\* *Memorials of Samuel Gurney*, p. 45.      † *Ibid.*, p. 46.

gether ill-timed or unnatural. For, doubtless, it was partly inspired by a remembrance of a letter from the man of business (which I have previously quoted), in which he wrote:—"A Lombard-street business, *especially our own*, is so very engrossing, and does in reality require such unremitting attention, that escape is not easy;" and added, in conclusion—"I can only *salve over my own mind* with the thought that my worldly engrossments have not been entirely my own choosing—have come upon me unsought, and may be for the present *my calling*."\*

That the money-getting spirit was very noticeable in the Society, even at the beginning of the last century, is evident from the constant exhortations in the *Rules of Discipline* to a larger charity, and from the allusions to the "hastening to be rich," as "a growing evil." And not only had the growth of this Mammon-worship the immediate effect of lowering the moral and religious tone of the disciples with whom it originated, but it produced very serious results as a means of lessening the numerical force, in the generations which came after them. "The young fry" (to adopt Barclay's expression applied to Oxford and Cambridge deacons), who saw behind the scenes, were astounded at the difference between *unworldly* profession and worldly reality. But there is no harm in the acquisition of wealth, as long as it is properly expended, upon correct objects of solicitude. The evil lies in professing not to care for it, and in acquiring it, and then not using it. Riches are a legitimate object of ambition, as long as they are made to minister to the wants and necessities of others. They are both the antecedents and accompaniments of progress.

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\* *Memorials of Samuel Gurney*, p. 44.

Wealth is one of the causes of knowledge : and knowledge (in Joseph John Gurney's own language)—“ Knowledge, with a sense of need, both temporally and spiritually, is the first step to improvement.” This improvement actually took place, and gradually removed the disparity between high profession and actual achievement, by lessening the unreality of the one, and developing the substantiality of the other. This particularly commends itself to our notice. Wealth, *per se*, as merely an acquired something, with no outlets for its free dispensation, is essentially demoralizing. But the moment it increases knowledge, the sphere of usefulness is enlarged, the susceptibility to liberal thought is generated, there is an augmented outlet for charity, and he who is so blessed becomes the medium of unnumbered blessings to others. With this improvement came also, to the rising generation, a perception of the desirableness of free communication with their kind, of embellishing life with many things which their predecessors had abjured, and of recognizing complete intercourse with the Author of all Good, through other and more satisfying channels than that of spiritual insulation. Thus, Quaker Society continued to expand ; and their expansion increased their knowledge, developed their sympathies, redoubled their power of augmenting and dispensing wealth, and led them, in fact, *out* of themselves into a beautiful world which their first Founder had forsworn in a period of distracted reason, and a day of convulsed moral darkness. Thus, every step to liberate themselves from the thralldom of their antecedents, was an emancipation from their own peculiar idiosyncrasies, a fraternization with others, and a homage to the compound and many-sided nature of all true advancement. Those who have

not yielded to these enlarging influences constitute the unhappy few, who, deteriorated in body and mind, remain shrouded in the lifeless formality of self-complacent unprogressiveness; still "heaping up riches, and knowing not who shall gather them." Or else that still smaller number, who are perpetually striving to mount to the higher rounds, without first treading the lower ones, of that ladder which is between earth and heaven; and who ignore, to their own ceaseless misery, those humbling conditions upon which, and which only, we can hold calm and uninterrupted communion with God.

The labours of the Society of Friends in the cause of slave emancipation, in the improvement of our prison discipline, and in other philanthropic missions, all testify more or less to the expansive liberality of the times, rather than to the merits of a peculiar creed. From this expansive influence the best Friends have not been able to escape: they have virtually abandoned their "ancient principles," though remaining nominally attached to the Society. And this very expansiveness of necessity involved a fraternization with others, a relinquishment, in one sense, of that axiom of Fox's, which he meant for social as well as religious application—"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." In another sense, however, they retained it: for their return to the world was a separation from *themselves*.

But there is one characteristic of their body, which has been much dwelt upon by those who are favourably inclined towards Quakerism, as specially redounding to their credit—namely, *that they have no poor*. Now, without wishing in any sense to disparage the active charities of *transition* Quakers—those, I mean, who, under the warmth of general civilization, are merging from the

chrysalis of formality into an energizing and unfettered excellence—and whose good deeds are equal to those of any other Christian sect—I am desirous of asking what is meant to be implied by this affirmation. Are we to understand that the freedom of the Society from poor members, is owing to unusual supervision on the part of the elders and visitors, to the inculcation of thrifty habits, and to the well-timed distribution of material assistance from the general funds? Is it not the rather true to state that Quakerism itself has always appeared in so uninviting an aspect, as never to retain but a very few, below a certain social position, within its ranks? Does not the adoption of this creed involve so many negations of what is usually recognized as necessary for the well-being of man; so many scruples of a finer and unappreciable sort; so many obstructions and hindrances to conventional conduct; so many clogs to useful citizenship, as to make it a very questionable matter of policy, and an equally doubtful matter of religious duty? The repelling features of Quakerism so far exceed its alluring ones; and its powers of adapting both sexes to the general purposes of life are so universally disputed, that the poor are not likely to cling to it so much as the wealthy. The latter can afford to be religiously singular as well as singularly religious: the former cannot. Mr. Clarkson says “that the poor, comparatively speaking, are seldom disowned, for they know that they shall never be so well provided for in any other Society.”\* But the fact is, that the number of those who bear the appellation of “poor” is so small, that they can always secure abundant employment from their own upper classes. Hence they are not really poor, but

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\* *Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol. iii., p. 326.

only nominally so. These, of a truth, have no interest in forsaking a community by whom they can earn an honest livelihood, and from whom they are certain to obtain every assistance, in case of misfortune or distress, not resulting from their own misconduct. But now that the rich Friends are forsaking the creed of their fathers, even the few poor are doing so likewise ; and I am assured that all the subordinate offices in Quaker mansions (for the rich live in *mansions* nowadays, and are not ashamed to own it) are filled by those who are not required to “thee and thou” their masters and mistresses, or to refuse them the outward demonstration of respect.\* These observations equally apply to the middle classes, who receive every support as shopkeepers, not only from their own body, but from Nonconformists of every persuasion, and from the more liberal of the Church people likewise.

So that, whilst I am willing to acknowledge most entirely the many objective forms which Quaker charity assumes, and to do full justice to the philanthropy of the Society’s best members, in conjunction with other religious bodies, it is hardly fair to give them credit, collectively, for a state of things which is dependent upon the reciprocal arrangements of social expediency, rather than on the perfection of their eleemosynary provisions for the needy and the poor.

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\* In a town with which I was well acquainted in early life, where Quakers did abound, the number of poor was ridiculously small. Personally I had no acquaintance with but one, and he was acknowledged by his neighbours to be (what he appeared to me) a mean and contemptible little fellow. But it is easy to understand how Quakerism should make a low uneducated man a mass of most repulsive self-sufficiency—and how little, therefore, he would attract others, in the same social position, to his creed.

Perhaps to the above causes of the Decline of Quakerism, may be added the fact, that during the last thirty years a considerable stimulus has been given to all Nonconformist bodies, by the withdrawal of certain restrictions, from which the Society of Friends only enjoyed a previous immunity. It is possible, therefore, under these circumstances, that some few members may have migrated from an uncongenial but protecting creed, to another more consonant with individual taste, and now under the benign influence of Civil and Religious Liberty.

I have thus analyzed what appear to me to be sufficiently explanatory reasons, why Quakerism should be dying out of this country, and merging into other and more liberal Christian organizations. It will be seen that these causes *do* lie (as was suggested at the beginning of this Essay) in an increasing degeneracy of the Society's members; in something wrong in the original constitution of the Society itself; in the Rules of Discipline and Government; and in other extraneous but appreciable influences. A brief Recapitulation will place the matter succinctly before us.

*Firstly* :—The early History and the early Literature of Quakerism, are neither of them of a character to lend grace or dignity to a religious Eclecticism. The world requires some better voucher for the verity of a Divine Origin, than either insanity, or ignorance, or shameless extravagances of speech and manner, or even the sincere aspirations of an enthusiastic pietism. Neither the early History, nor the early Literature, of the Society of Friends will bear investigation; and the very incubus of these two facts robs it of a *prestige* which has always more or less influence upon the acceptance and progress of every

undertaking. Even the undoubted fact of its persecution fails to secure that sympathy which it would otherwise possess, because, however disgraceful and unjustifiable such persecution afterwards became, what was first termed so was only a punishment of the most violent offenders against public order and decency, as well as of the propagators of undeniable blasphemy.

*Secondly* :—The world is unable to appreciate, because it cannot bring within the defined limits of a rational creed, that fundamental doctrine of Quakerism, which gives a priority to what is called Inward Testimony over the written Revelation of the Bible. The immense majority of Christians, while they are anything but insensible to the influence of the Divine Spirit, are yet of opinion that Scripture itself is the “primary rule of faith and manners,” to which Christianity is to be conformed, and *by* which it is to be gauged. They believe that any doctrine that is not based upon this view, is practically open, even in the hands of the best intentioned individuals, to the most extravagant abuse, and the most dangerous perversion. For (whatever may be affirmed to the contrary) it makes religious emotions, and spiritual ecstasies, which are capricious and morbid, the uncertain standard of individual excellence, rather than that Divine Record which does not change, but is more immutable than “the everlasting hills.” They are convinced that once having ascertained a standard to be TRUTH, it derives its chief value from being an unvarying indicator of right and wrong, altogether independent of mortal weaknesses. It must be set up, therefore, where each man can see it—*external* to his own individuality, and under the shadow of the Redeemer’s Cross.

*Thirdly* :—It is believed by a large proportion of Chris-

tians (and their belief is confirmed by the experience of every age, and supported by Scripture), that to refuse to set men apart, and give them, by a particular kind of education, a thorough knowledge of the human heart, and of the power of properly applied religion to subdue it, is neither wise nor politic. That, afterwards, the continued refusal to organize the individuals so trained into a ministerial band—to constitute them into a distinct profession—is to neglect the use of one of those providential engines by which a world may be moved, and moved at the same time towards God. That the value of a minister does not depend upon his familiarity with concordant texts, or upon the loftiness of his spiritual aspirations; but upon the special aptitude which he may have for teaching others the principles of moral and religious Truth; and for energizing into practical virtue, by his own tact, and sociability, and general example, all those with whom he may be brought in contact. That, in fact, as frequently a very indifferent scholar may be a very good teacher; and a very indifferent teacher a good scholar—so a very excellent spiritualist may be a very poor propagator of the Gospel, and a very good propagator a comparatively feeble and unemotional spiritualist.

That the perfection of real Evangelization is of so complex a character, and dependent upon so many congruous influences, material, intellectual, moral, and religious; requiring, on the part of its teachers, such a complete devotion of time and capacity, that any one who undertakes such teaching must live by it; and that to live by it, he must from some quarter or other be handsomely remunerated. That such remuneration should be fixed and definite, and not dependent upon the spasmodic contributions of (perhaps) a poor and unenlightened people.

That woman, by reason of her emotional tendency ; of the manifold domestic duties which have been assigned to her by Society, and by the intuitive perceptions of an innate modesty, is only fitted to labour in a subordinate capacity in the Lord's vineyard, where, as School-teacher, or district-visitor, she becomes the Ministering Angel of Godlike Charity.

And to these propositions I am desirous of adding the circumstance, that neither the Jewish nor the Christian schemes which constitute the Bible, have been conveyed to us through the medium of man's helpmeet. That she—beautiful in her humility—was only resorted to by the Wisdom of the Father when, through the ordinary channel of man's birth, He gave to us the Incarnation of the Son. That when that Son had fulfilled his mission, and gone back to the heavenly mansions, she, the adorable Mother, more capable, from her antecedents, and from her personal knowledge of the "Great Sufferer," of ministering to the wants of mortality than any living soul, was quietly withdrawn from us, only once again to be mentioned in Scripture : for "from that hour that Disciple (the beloved John) took her unto his own home."

*Fourthly* :—Every act of worship is, or should be, an attempt to bring ourselves into closer communion with God, who, though "Infinite and Absolute," is yet revealed most clearly to individual hearts as something less than either the one or the other ; as something, in fact (according to Mr. Mansel), "conditioned" by our "consciousness." The intercourse between earth and heaven is not easy to originate, much less to perpetuate. Its perfect continuity is only to be sustained through the medium of subordinate instrumentalities, which constitute the divine arrangements providentially adapted to our weaknesses, as

lessening the immeasurable distance between the finite and the Infinite. "Silent worship" is a complete insulation from every connecting medium, leaving even upon the strongest mind a most unnatural (*i. e.* morbid) sense of God's "awfulness" and unapproachableness. Originating in the best and purest feeling, its result has shown how daring is the attempt which should seek to carry mortal man into the *immediate presence* of his Immortal Maker. It does not, therefore, recommend itself to general acceptance; the majority of minds preferring a more substantial and dependent homage, ranging between the limits of verbal simplicity, and the most gorgeous elaborations of a ritual worship.

*Fifthly*.—It is not generally apprehended with sufficient clearness, that "vitiating religious sentiments have often too much connexion with the principles of our physical constitution to be effectively amended by methods that are simply theological." A brisk purgation, a matutinal shower-bath, a gentle stimulant, a judicious opiate, or a "dig in the ribs," are, at times, wonderful adjuvants in the reduction of a flimsy and fictitious pietism, to the equable reality of truth and soberness. There are certain physical conditions on which it is impossible to engraft the highest forms of Christian virtue: and if the former are not susceptible of amelioration, the latter are not to be courted with any reasonable prospect of success. It is an increasing perception of this fact which constitutes the secret of our progress in home and foreign missions. We drain our towns; we improve the dwellings of the poor; we encourage secular education; we discourage, by appealing to statistical evidence, where we cannot actually forbid by legislative enactments, frequent intermarriages, as an indisputable cause of somatic deterioration. We inculcate cheerfulness; we

disown "seriousness," as a mental habit incompatible with the performance of our manifold Christian duties; and we regard an "emotional religion" as one of the most pestilential nuisances which can afflict a community of Christian men. For it is at one time (as in the case of J. J. Gurney and Mrs. Fry, and all extravagant pietists), the accompaniment of the purest aspirations, and the most agonizing self-abasement: at another (as in the case of some whom I shall not name), of the most inconsistent conduct in the details of daily life, and the most unwarrantable spiritual self-sufficiency. We believe that "all kinds of introverted mental action, even of the most innocent sort, are more or less debilitating to both mind and body, and trebly so when attended by powerful emotions."

*Sixthly*:—The habits and conventional customs of a Christian Society, if not professedly based upon Scripture, are not repugnant to it. They necessarily vary with the progress of civilization, and the development of man's intellectual nature. True religion may be adapted to every change; and every change may and should be adapted to true religion. The abuse of a thing by excessive and perverted usage is no justification, with educated persons, for its equal abuse by no usage at all. Our discipline lies in so *using* everything which surrounds us, as not to abuse it. To repudiate the discipline is to repudiate the required conditions of advancement to a perfect standard of Christian excellenc. This is precisely what Quakerism has done. It is a continuous defiance of public taste—a direct antagonism to the protecting influences of social conventionalities. The consequence is, that the Society of Friends, as such, has no sympathy with others, and others have no sympathy with it. If its members have acquired

a character for honesty and sobriety, they have equally secured to themselves a reputation for pertinacious obstinacy. Laying claim to peculiar simplicity, they have really only stripped religion of her accessories, and carried all her ritual formalities into the details of daily life, and the minutiae of social intercourse. Hence, both their religion and their manners are at variance with those of the generality of men about them, who believe it to be as much a duty of religion to be compliant citizens, as to be frequenters of church or chapel; and who will not repudiate the obvious advantages, to all, of systematic conformity to the social code, for the very unappreciable benefits of pseudo-spiritual obstructiveness. Solitude being (as Bayard Taylor describes it) "an immortal humbug," and a downright impostor, it is certain that no religious man *ought* to be any the worse for mixing in society: it is equally certain that he *ought* to be the better for it. Failing, the fault is with the religion, and not with the society; for the latter is the proper field for the cultivation of the former, and for the development of all those excellencies which will be elaborated into perfection, when we "stand up anew from the dust of dissolution."

As regards the larger questions of the unlawfulness of Oaths and War: Quakers have every civil protection afforded to their scruples, and they receive every credit for the conscientiousness of their objections to the popular belief. But here, too, their views are obstructive and unacceptable. For the almost universal opinion is, that oaths are not contrary to Scripture; that some kind of juratory form, in our present imperfect state, is a protection to morality and truth; that that which protects truth protects religion; that that which protects religion develops and accompanies the highest excellencies of Christian virtue, which shall one day dispense with oaths.

War is acknowledged to be one of the evils incidental to an imperfect state. The improvement of the state will do away with the necessity of the evil. Truly the peacemakers are blessed; but they are not peacemakers, and, therefore, not blessed, who refuse to defend themselves against aggression. Civilization is gradually removing the causes of aggression; Peace, and Blessing, and Universal Brotherhood shall ensue; "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

*Seventhly*:—Every age has special characteristics, by which it is distinguished from those which have preceded it. The most striking feature of our own day is progress. Not a fanatical enthusiasm about *one* of the elements of progress; but a combined and well-adjusted movement, which recognizes assistance from every quarter. Progress is stamped upon everything. Secular Education, scientific discoveries, popular lectures on the topics of the day, freer intercourse of class with class, the application of sanitary and hygienic rules, the building of schools and places of worship, the increased training of teachers, and the more special instruction of Gospel ministers; all these things attest, by unmistakeable evidence, that we are not, nationally, in a state of indolence or lethargy. An immense impetus has been given to everything during the last fifty years. All classes have yielded to this impetus; and the various Churches, or religious organizations, are stretching out their arms to gather in the pilgrims to what may seem to each wayfarer to be his most congenial shrine. The best of the Society of Friends have not been backward; on the contrary, they have marched in the very van of progress. They have striven, however, to Christianize, not to *Quakerize*. They have

believed, with the good Mrs. Fry, that there are serious objections attached to every sect, and *most* serious ones to a sect which is unreal; and that one cannot too fully recognize, or too strongly inculcate, "the unutterable largeness of the real foundation." These very facts have constituted the Quakers' own emancipation from themselves, and have led them to leave to the discernment of their own children the paths by which they should walk towards Heaven. This emancipation, too, has involved a distinct and necessary repudiation of the fundamental doctrine of the Society. "For certain it is, and clear to demonstration, that whosoever holding the principle of ancient Quakerism—the perceptible teaching of the Spirit—on the ground of conventional consistency, withholds either directly or indirectly from the young, the ignorant, the tempted, that counsel, instruction, warning, and sympathy which they need, does it on his own private, personal, intransferable responsibility, exclusively and alone;" refuses to expand with the expansiveness of the times, and lays himself open to a worse charge than that only of perpetuating intellectual and moral stagnation.

*Eighthly* :—A corporate Society, be it religious or be it political, must have great superiority over other Societies, when it can afford to be exclusive, to "disown," to refuse to proselytize, and yet still not incur a diminution in its numbers. It is not by any means clear that Quakerism has this superiority; but the Rules of Discipline are an acknowledgment of its exclusiveness; and its fundamental doctrine will not admit of proselytism. Younger members of the Society of Friends, who have not been gifted with very large appreciation of the "ancient testimonies" of its first disciples, have treated "Disownment," under the sanction of their parents, much as the Protestant Churches

have often treated an Excommunicating Bull from St. Peter's.

Thus, Quakerism has diminished, and become the skeleton we now see it. There is none can put life into its dry bones; for progress and augmentation are the true elements of Life.

*Ninthly*:—There is nothing more singular in connexion with the Society of Friends, than their undoubted material prosperity, as compared with the loftiness of their spiritual professions. Every one is cognizant of this fact, and remarks upon it in a manner which, if it does not imply absolute mistrust and disapproval, at least suggests a question—‘How are these glaring contradictions to be explained—how are these obvious inconsistencies to be reconciled?’ The answers (as I have previously shown) have been various, and very far from satisfactory, even to the best of the Society's own members. If the spirit of acquisition becomes a passion (as Mrs. Fry believed it had become), and is accompanied by a narrow unexpansiveness and a timid liberality, there ensues a mental and moral deterioration, which constitutes the most offensive feature in the character of many Quakers. If it be otherwise, to be generous is to fraternize with other religious denominations; to be liberal is to enlarge the heart's boundaries; to expand is to escape from the frigid formalities of an uncongenial creed. Wealth is not *then* a passion, but a noble ambition, which is made to minister (as it has done with hundreds of excellent Friends) to a boundless philanthropy, and feed the abundant streams of a creedless but Heaven-born Charity. The high standard *professed*, has been the Society's own creation. By that standard the world judges them, and they are found *practical* shortcomers, and unreal religionists.

*Lastly*:—It is possible that the spread of civil and reli-

gious Liberty, during the last thirty years, by nearly equalizing the privileges of all Nonconformist bodies, may have drawn some members from the Society of Friends.

Seeing, then, that these things are so, and that "Ancient Quakerism" must, by the very constitution of things, continue to be more at variance with public taste, and with the conventionalisms of Society, as Time and all things are progressing: seeing that its fundamental doctrine of the "Universal Light"—the perceptible teaching of the Spirit—is productive, when pushed to its extreme (as it is sure to be by the really good and excellent who embrace it), of the most agonizing and unprofitable mental disquietude; and equally productive of self-complacency in those who are absorbed in the ceaseless rounds of pecuniary aggrandizement, what is there to be said why the sentence of annihilation which has gone forth against this singular Eclecticism should not be fully executed? Has Quakerism nothing to recommend it? Is there nothing about it which can be utilized, and adapted to the exacting service, not only of the nineteenth century, but (with Dr. Cumming's permission) of all the centuries which are to come? What has this creed done? What has it *not* done? Has it looked upon life as a jubilant and blessed thing? Has it instituted in its followers a manly virtue, growing by the natural discipline of temptation, purified by the præternatural breathings of Grace? Has it energized its disciples into that serene cheerfulness without which the mind never attains to healthfulness, and the soul never tastes of peace? Or, dissatisfied with this theatre of existence, which has been crowded with countless heroisms, from the first triumph over temptation by one never so feeble, to the great and crowning sacrifice

of the Son of God, has it repudiated all that is solid and beautiful, for some soul-sophisticating subtlety—clothed itself in elaborate grotesqueness, and uttered the self-complacent cry, “Touch me not, handle me not: I am holier than thou?” Has it, or has it not, essayed for two centuries to do that with the healthy stimulant of Life, which “a Century of Divines” is now seeking to do with the Grain and the Fruit of Life—placing a restriction upon the beneficence of God, and establishing in lieu thereof a system meet only to be the miserable expedient of the weakest sensualist—the last resource of insane depravity? Let History and A FALLEN FAITH answer. But, I repeat, has Quakerism *nothing* to recommend it? If the term “ancient” comprised only its period of initiation, I would affirm that nothing could be said in its favour; for the good which it did was far outweighed by the mischief and the serious evil which it generated. But as this religious corporation has existed among us for the last hundred years, it has a distinguishing feature which has ever appeared to me both wonderful and beautiful. Wonderful it is because of its extreme rarity; and because if there was one thing which the First Founder of Quakerism had not, it was the characteristic to which I am alluding. Beautiful it is because it *may* lend grace and attractiveness to almost any Creed—for CHARITY has been said to “cover a multitude of sins.”

When we think of the fiendish barbarities which have been perpetrated by religious persecutors, impressed with the strongest belief that Heaven was to be won through rivers of martyred blood, and through the ceaseless indulgence of “the malign passions:” when we bear in mind that, even in our own day, there is scarcely an unkind thing which one zealous Christian will not say of another,

from whom he differs; and contrast with these demoralizing realities the Love and Mercy of that Gospel through which we hope, and of that Redeemer whose every act was kindness, and who died, and who now lives, that we, dying, may live also—what man will dare to say, that Charity, when met with, is not a jewel of priceless value?

I have heard Romish preachers yell out their furious anathemas against (what they termed) “the hellish apostasy” of the English Reformation. I have heard young “Anglo-Catholic” clergymen dogmatize with true neophytic intemperance on doctrinal subtleties which they had hardly embraced twelve months, and avow that the safety of all mankind hung upon their acceptance. I have heard “Evangelical” clergymen pay back the Romanist in language as bitter and vindictive as the devil himself could conceive or utter. I have heard “Nonconformist” preachers, of various denominations, so coarse and offensive in their phraseology, as of necessity to shock minds endowed with the least delicacy or refinement—heard them propose heaven upon such terms, and as the theatre of such extraordinary occupations, as would make it very unacceptable to a large proportion of Christians. I have heard all these things, I say, and yet I never heard a Quaker exceed by language, nor saw him overstep by manner, the narrowest limits of Christian Charity.

Wonderful and beautiful indeed! O this outweighs so many perversities, and weaknesses, and ruinous misapprehensions of God’s dealing with His people, that it almost forces one’s assent to Joseph John Gurney’s affirmation, that “Quakerism, rightly understood, is nothing more or less than the Religion of the New Testament.” It makes one almost question whether it has been right to attest so largely, and so congruously, against a creed

which has been thus shrouded and protected. And yet it must be added, that the charity so unfailing in the Society of Friends is of a puny and unprogressive sort, and does not reach that high standard which may be attained by the same virtue under other religious fostering. The moment it reaches the higher standard (as it did with Mrs. Fry) it has escaped from its original impassivity, deserted its own cradle, and energized itself into the active excellence which increases and dispenses blessings as it flows. This constitutes its superiority. It is no longer the negative charity only, which refuses to speak ill of its neighbour, or to resent an injury. But it is a large and abundant liberality of thought and feeling: unreserved, frank, generous, sympathizing with every wayfarer, and bringing all to the tree of Life and Knowledge. This is the charity which is needed—a charity which does not “disown,” does not refuse consolation to the doubting—but embraces all men in the arms of Love and Mercy.

O that with the decadence of Quakerism may come not to us, nor to any land, the extinction of even that impassive charity, without some measure of which no man can be serenely happy, or dare to hope for that Mercy, which, even to the most guilty of us, may, perchance, be boundless and eternal! O that we may receive from the deserting members of the Society which has nearly run its course, that charity which has not fully availed their collective body, because it has lacked the accompaniment of that knowledge, which consists in making the dangers of this life the discipline to prepare and purify us for the next! This is true wisdom. This is the basis on which to raise the splendid superstructure of spiritual communion, and religious Faith.

To this desiderated consummation has the dying

Society of Friends been invited, in tones of Christian earnestness, by one who is above my feeble praises, but whose love and labour are known to all. It has been appealed to to hasten the "Kingdom of Christ" on earth, ere we are gathered to the everlasting Kingdom in Heaven.

It has been urged, too, in tones of glowing eloquence, with which I shall conclude this Essay—it has been urged by one of its own members, who laments, but does not marvel, at its fall, to stand up from its unintellectual lethargy, and shake off that impassivity which is far less than the measure of its decay. For, says he, "for lack of knowledge—that knowledge which the light of ecclesiastical history has since afforded—the early confessors and martyrs of our common religion initiated a spiritual despotism the most dire that ever proved the opprobrium of the Church, and the curse of the world. Long afterward, in times of intense reaction against the usurped authority of man, for lack of knowledge, a Nayler and others are seen to mistake the workings of a distempered feeling for revelations of the Spirit of God. A William Penn, with complacent hospitality, carries the fatal fire-waters to American Indians. In our own day, we have seen a whole party of devoted Christian Missionaries ruin their hallowed enterprise, and themselves perish miserably, for lack of the knowledge possessed even by the rough seaman who tracked them too late to their last resting-place, and whose tears fell fast over their mouldering remains. Lastly, and more specifically to the purpose than all, we have at this moment before our eyes, the sad spectacle of a religious society, more desirous, if we may trust to its own averments, than any other, of being led and guided in all things by the infallible Spirit, yet so completely misunderstanding (as it seems) its own fundamental principle, as to deem it in-

compatible with that *organized instrumentality* without which even Christian communities are permitted, apparently by God's decree, to dwindle into insignificance, or sink into utter extinction."\*

Is not this, indeed, to realize, in a corporate capacity, what was said by a wise man of old concerning individual mortality—that he that “wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead”?

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\* *The Principle of Ancient Quakerism*, &c., p. 38.

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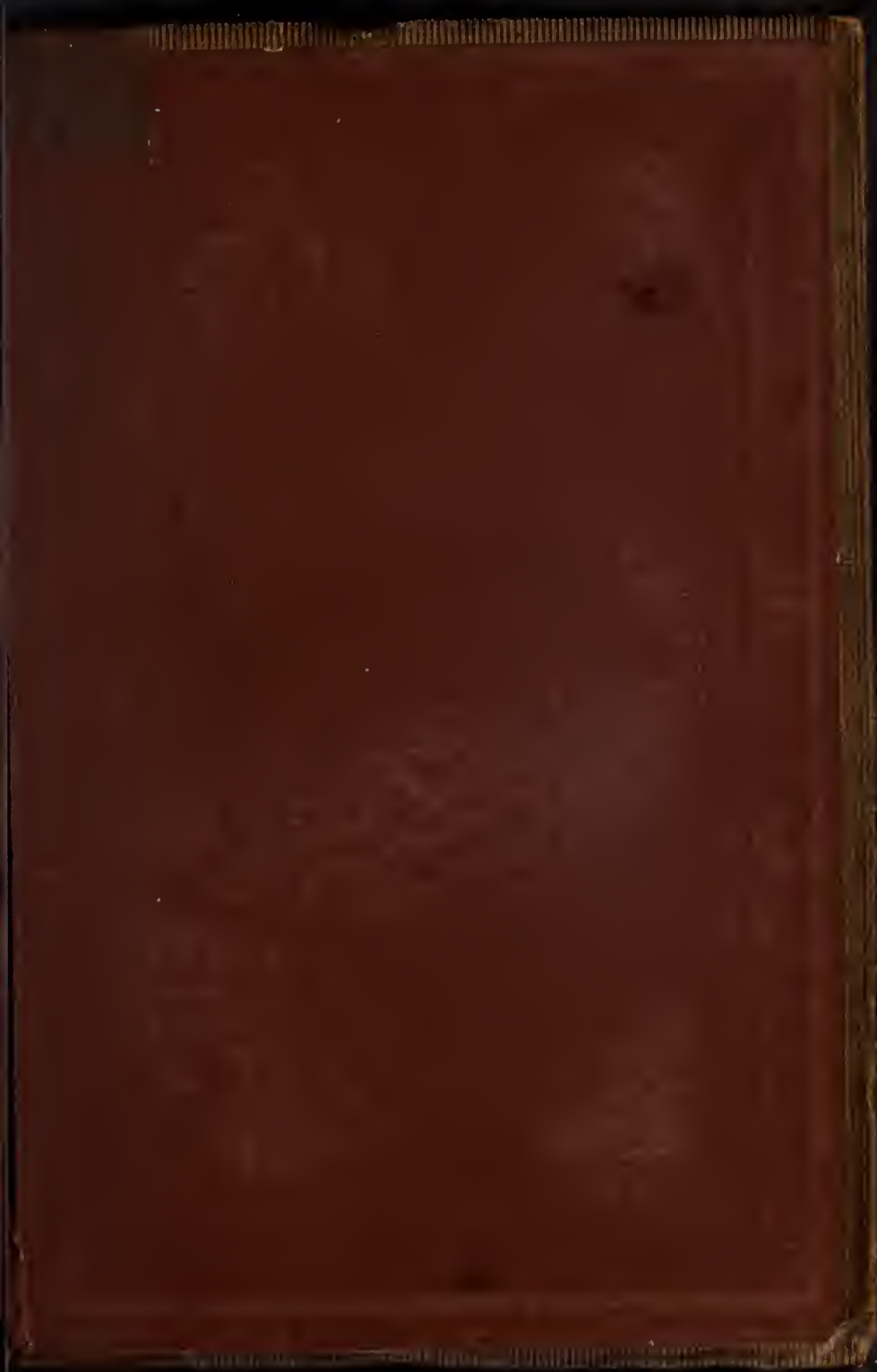


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